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# **From Tin Trunk to World-Wide Memory; The making of the Bleek collection**

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A minor dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award  
of the degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies, with a specialisation in  
Public Culture

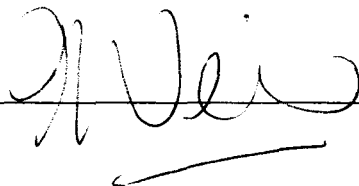
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2006

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7 April 2006

# **From tin trunk to world-wide memory – the making of the Bleek collection**

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## **Abstract**

THIS research sketches the history of the Bleek-Lloyd collection by documenting the cataloguing and archiving of material which has occurred in the years subsequent to the recording of the original manuscripts and certain related material during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. It attempts to track the processes by which material elements (notebooks, manuscripts, printed documents, artefacts, objects and original artworks, correspondence, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, books, photographs, paintings) became consolidated – or separated – as part of the making of what is now known as the Bleek-Lloyd archive. In addition, this research examines the various projects of knowledge production and writing which have emanated from the archive in the 80 years since a small part of the notebook texts, edited by Lucy Lloyd, was published in 1911. In particular, I examine ways in which the notebook texts have been deployed in the service of emerging and established academic disciplines including philology, “native studies”, folklore and anthropology, archaeology and rock art interpretation. In more recent times, the Bleek collection provides a case study of the archive reconstituted for the new nation, serving not only as a site for the recovery of lost or hidden histories, but also as location for an international, redemptive celebration of indigenous identities.

## Terms and definitions

### **Bleek “collection”; “Bleek-Lloyd materials”:**

THROUGHOUT this dissertation I have chosen to refer to the body of materials residing at UCT’s Manuscripts and Archives Division under the catalogue number BC 151, The Bleek Collection, and associated materials held at the National Library of South Africa, and the Iziko South African Museum, catalogued under the names Lucy Lloyd, Dorothea Bleek and W H I Bleek, as the “Bleek collection” or “the Bleek-Lloyd materials”. I have resisted using the word “archive” to refer to these materials, as I wish to emphasize that what is being discussed is a collection of materials comprising papers, artworks, published documents, newspaper clippings, personal and public correspondence, photographs, even objects. In using instead, terms like “collection” and “materials”, I signal a refusal to accept the sense of solidity, finality and cohesion which may reside in an unproblematised use of the word “archive”. In my use of the term “archive” in general, I am at all times aware of the unproblematised nature of the use of the word archive, particularly in relation to the context of the work done by Bleek and Lloyd. I use the phrase “archive making” as a means of indicating an understanding of archive as process rather than thing.

The name given to the collection of notebooks recorded by Bleek and Lloyd, and associated materials, has been the subject of debate and contestation for a number of years. UCT’s curators Leonie Twentyman Jones and Etaine Eberhardt chose the name *The Bleek Collection* when they catalogued the collection early in the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> More recently, the name of Bleek’s co-researcher, and sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, has been added, and the collection is referred to as the “Bleek and Lloyd Collection” in certain contexts.<sup>2</sup> In dedicating her installation exhibition *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture*, and its companion publication *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (1996), to the memory of Lucy Lloyd, Pippa Skotnes has sought to reverse a trend in which she perceives Lloyd to have been “ignored or

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<sup>1</sup> Etaine Eberhardt and Leonie Twentyman Jones, *The Bleek Collection, A List* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> See for instance the title of Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson’s edited publication *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996).

cast into the role of sister-in-law assistant” in relation to the research project.<sup>3</sup> To pay tribute to Lloyd’s great contribution to the notebooks and to recognise her achievements as a scholar in her own right, Skotnes has set up the UCT-based research centre, the *Lucy Lloyd Archive*, Research and Exhibition Centre.

## The “research subjects”

IN this dissertation, I use the phrases “research subjects” or “dependents” to draw attention to the unequal power relation that would unavoidably have characterised the research encounters between Bleek, Lloyd and their research subjects. For flow of writing and clarity of language, I have also used the word “interviewees”, to similarly indicate their lack of agency. I have further used the phrase “research subject” to highlight the fact that the encounters were embarked on by Bleek as a “scientific” project. The words “encounter” or “interaction” have been further used to acknowledge the fluid, dynamic, yet constructed nature of the interactions between Bleek, Lloyd and the prisoners who later became subject to their “bushman researches”.

The /Xam prisoners who worked with Bleek and Lloyd tended to be referred to as “informants” in early academic writings.<sup>4</sup> Many contributors to the edited volume *Miscast*, use the words /Xam, San or Khoisan, to refer to the research subjects.<sup>5</sup> More recently, terms such as “narrator”, “teacher”, or “contributor” have been used to foreground the presence of the research subjects in way that assigns them greater agency in the process.<sup>6</sup> Some of these terms, in my opinion, can be read as contributing to romanticised notions of the research encounters.

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<sup>3</sup> Pippa Skotnes, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>4</sup> See Janette Deacon, “A Tale of Two Families: Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and the /Xam San of the Northern Cape”, in Skotnes, *Miscast*, 93-113. See also, co-edited by the same author, *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (op.cit), and her contributions therein, “The /Xam Informants”, 11-39, and “Archaeology of the Flat and Grass Bushmen”, 245-270. See also Mathias Guenther, “Attempting to Contextualise /Xam Oral Tradition”, 77-99, in the same volume.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Martin Hall, “The Proximity of Dr Bleek’s Bushmen”, in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 143-159.

<sup>6</sup> For “teacher”, see Jeremy Hollmann, Ed., *Customs and Beliefs of the /Xam Bushmen* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, n.d.), xix; for “narrator” see Alan James, *The First Bushman’s Path: Stories, Songs and Testimonies of the /Xam of the Northern Cape* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001), 16ff, and Antjie Krog, *the stars say “tsau”: /Xam poetry of Dia!kwain, Kweiten-ta-//ken, /A!kunta, /Han=kass’o and //Kabbo* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2004).



### **Post-apartheid, postcolonial, post modern:**

IN my use of the terms “postcolonial”, “post-apartheid”, and “post modern”, I use the prefix “post” to acknowledge both “temporal supersession” as well as the creation of a new space for cultural studies which surpasses national boundaries.<sup>7</sup> For post-apartheid specifically, I am referring chronologically to the period in South Africa's history subsequent to the freeing of Nelson Mandela, and the unbanning of the African National Congress on 11 February 1990. I choose this moment in recognition of the sweeping cultural, even psychological, changes to the national imaginary which followed, and in preference to the overtly political transformation ushered in after the first national democratic election of 27 April 1994.

For postcolonial, I am referring broadly to the period following the reversal of colonialism in Africa, which occurred from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. My use of the term recognises the continued presence of economic imperialism in the form of global capital which remains dominant in the economies of many formerly colonial states.

My understanding of the term post modern is of a movement in media and arts which includes questioning the primacy of the author as creator of text. I further understand post modern to include the crossing of traditional boundaries between popular and high culture, a questioning of the notion of objective truth, and an embrace of reflexivity and the capacity to be self-aware.<sup>8</sup>

### **Writing and arche-writing**

I USE the term **writing** to refer to the blurring of disciplinary boundaries in much scholarship emanating from the Bleek-Lloyd archive. I use the term also to evoke the term *arche-writing* in which Derrida, after Freud, recognises the act of writing as a process constituted by the pre-existing presence of the unconscious, the pre-existing *arche-writing* which brings meaning to perception.<sup>9</sup> I am, moreover, aware of the

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<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Hawthorne, *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (London: Arnold, 2001), 269-70.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (London: Penguin, 2000), 272.

<sup>9</sup> Hawthorn, 20.

complex theory of *écriture*, which (after Barthes) attempts to see writing as an act free from the marks of literature and human agency.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hawthorn, 98.

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## Introduction; Undoing the archive

*"[W]ithout the archive there can be no collective memory at all ... all forms of collective memory can now only be mediated through the formal archive of the established social power."*<sup>1</sup>

*"History now organises the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations. The document ... is no longer for history an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations."*<sup>2</sup>

THE Bleek-Lloyd collection has become the focus of a range of writing in the post-apartheid and postcolonial moment. Texts from the notebooks of "bushman folklore", penned by Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, have provided a subject for academic analysis and research across a range of disciplines for some 90 years since the first publication of a small part of the material in 1911.<sup>3</sup> Following their initial publication, the texts (both published and unpublished) have been worked on almost continuously, as I hope to show in the following chapters, with both academic and popular interest reaching fever pitch by the mid-1990s. This culminated in a moment of international recognition in 1997, when the notebooks, images and additional materials associated with Bleek and Lloyd's "bushman researches" were declared a *Memory of the World* site of documentary heritage by the United Nations-sponsored cultural organisation UNESCO.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Morphet, "Miscast" in *Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture* 6, 1(1997): 98.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Trans., A M Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989): 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> See L C Lloyd, Ed., *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*, (London: George Allen & Company, 1911). Previously, the "Third Report concerning Bushman Researches, with a Short Account of the Bushman Native Literature Collected" was tabled before the Cape Parliament subsequent to Bleek's death in 1875, and published as L C Lloyd, Ed., *A Short Account of Further Bushman Material Collected*, (London: David Nutt, 1889). See also the re-issue of *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* with foreword by Megan Bieseke. (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 2001).

In this dissertation, I attempt, in a sense by undoing what is popularly known as the Bleek-Lloyd archive, to show the archive not simply as a repository of facts or documents or evidence available for discovery and extraction, but rather to attend to the particular processes by which the record has been shaped and altered over time.<sup>5</sup> In this endeavour, I explore the making of the Bleek-Lloyd collection, and examine the ways in which the record has been catalogued, altered and added to over time. In addition, I look at the different projects of knowledge production which have been associated with these processes of archive formation and reformation, starting with the initial transcriptions being used to support arguments about language being a marker of the origins and development of the human species (philology). This was followed by Lucy Lloyd's use of the notebook transcriptions in the service of documenting the folklore of a people seen to be disappearing, and later, by the notebook texts being deployed in the service of rock art interpretation and more generally to bolster the academic discipline of archaeology. Material from the notebooks has also been used to service the discipline of anthropology, particularly in documenting the lifeways and customs of groups of people seen as "primitive" or "disappearing". More recently, deployments in public contexts, of the notebook texts and other materials from the collection, have been shown to exemplify how the collection in particular, and archives in general, are being refigured and reconstituted for a transforming nation. In this respect, the Bleek and Lloyd materials – the notebooks in particular, are seen as site of suppressed or "lost" histories, and a place to locate and celebrate pre-colonial indigenous identities. Repackaged as a *Memory of the World*, moreover, the notebooks and associated materials have become internationally revered as encapsulating the last words of a "lost" people, and celebrated for the insight they provide into pre-industrial, pristine cultures and systems of belief.

This dissertation attempts to track the processes by which material elements (printed documents, artefacts, objects and original artworks, notebooks, correspondence, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, books and photographs) became consolidated – or fragmented – as part of the making of what has popularly become known as the Bleek-Lloyd archive, but was originally called the Bleek collection.<sup>6</sup> My investigation

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm/register/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reed, "Introduction" in Carolyn Hamilton *et al*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 7-17.

<sup>6</sup> See the section Terms and Definitions for a discussion of the various titles by which the collection is known.

involves tracking the physical/material components of the collection as they were moved from their different places of private storage to public custody, and moved again, from one place of public safekeeping to another. It involves too, an examination of the ways in which texts and other materials from the archive have been deployed in public discourse, and the kinds of knowledges which have been produced in these interactions. It attempts to draw out possible connections between institutional practice as reflected in the particular ways in which material has been catalogued, and the various interpretations which have been made by the range of researchers and scholars who have interacted with the materials.

In addition, this research is intended to speak to the Foucaultian contention, cited in the epigraph to this chapter, in which “history” is unequivocally aligned to the structure of language and the arrangement of documents: or, as Foucault put it, “history is the work expended on material documentation”, rather than a reconstitutive process occasioned by memory.<sup>7</sup> In other words, what can the making of the Bleek-Lloyd collection tell us about Foucault’s theories in relation to history and the organisation of documents?

Foucault suggested that documents were neither “inert”, nor the means by which society refreshed its memory.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the organisation of documents was constitutive of a particular history for a particular society: they were both defining of that particular moment of social history, and defined by it. History or the past, argued Foucault, was structured in terms of the hierarchies and relationships among documents, and society was “inextricably linked” to that mass of documentation. Rather than memory, Foucault contended, our view of the past was structured by the way the material, or documentary, residue of the past was ordered, giving rise to the absolutely central role that he ascribed to the archive. To simplify further, our view of the past is structured more by the way documents from the past are ordered, arranged and given status in relation to one another, than about the ability of memory to provide an avenue into that past.

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Foucault, 6-7.

If Foucault's aim was to reveal the "great, uniform text" which "men" have substituted for the "diversity of things said",<sup>9</sup> then my task in this dissertation is to strip away accumulated layers of human action in the archive around those documents which have now coalesced as the Bleek collection, and to reveal the diverse elements beneath. By diverse elements, I mean both those agents who have been active in the processes of archive formation, as well as the particular trajectories followed by objects and elements during the course of archive formation. These agents and trajectories have both influenced, and been influenced by, knowledge production, as well as the kinds of research purposes to which the archival material has been put.

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault, 118.

## *Miscast*

IN South Africa, Bleek-Lloyd materials have been the subject of a range of academic research and writing - particularly since the 1970s. However, the materials received their first major public exposure, with particular emphasis on visual imagery, in 1996 with the installation exhibition *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture*. Curated by Pippa Skotnes, and dedicated to Lucy Lloyd, the exhibition took place at the South African National Art Gallery (SANG) for five months from April 1996. At the time, much attention was paid to the choice of the art gallery as site for a display of “ethnographic” material. Then gallery director Marilyn Martin (now Director, Art Collections, Iziko Museums of Cape Town), referred subsequently to the exhibition as a leading example of the gallery’s efforts to transform its collections, exhibits and vision for the post-apartheid nation.<sup>10</sup> Photography featured strongly in the exhibition as three cameras were mounted on vinyl flooring printed with documents and images reprinted from archival material, in a forceful comment on the role of photography in the making of the colonial other.<sup>11</sup> The controversy following the opening of *Miscast* set the scene for intense public debate around questions of “bushman” identity and representation, and fed into related political issues such as land rights and restitution.

This dissertation wants to extend and deepen the investigation begun with *Miscast*, in which Skotnes’s stated intention was to put “the archive” and “the storeroom” on display.<sup>12</sup> Along with countering the ahistorical, racially stereotyped and physically-based “oral traditions” by which “bushmen” were typically represented at museum and heritage sites, the *Miscast* installation set out to speak to the representational issues encased within the South African Museum’s popular, now “archived”, diorama.<sup>13</sup> Part of Skotnes’s aim in *Miscast* was to examine the ideas that

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<sup>10</sup> Marilyn Martin, “Bringing the Past into the Present – facing and negotiating history, memory, redress and reconciliation at the South African National Gallery”, paper presented to the South African Museums Association conference, Durban (1996).

<sup>11</sup> See Pippa Skotnes, “The Politics of Bushman Representation” in Paul S Landau and Deborah D Kaspin, Eds., *Images & Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 267. For more on the role of photography in the making of the colonial other, see Jeremy Silvester *et al.*, “This ideal conquest: photography and colonialism in Namibian history”, in Wolfram Hartman, *et al.*, Eds., *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Skotnes, “Bushman Representation”, 261.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed history, description and images of the diorama and its contents, see Patricia Davison, “Typecast – Representations of the Bushmen at the South African Museum” in *Public Archaeology* 1, (2001): 3-20. See also Skotnes, “Bushman Representation”, 253-54. The diorama was “archived”



motivated the practices of life casting and physical anthropology, which focused attention exclusively on “bushman bodies” at the expense of a silence around their world of ideas and imagination. In contrast, the Bleek-Lloyd archive could be read “as a collaborative document through which the /Xam were able to represent themselves”.<sup>14</sup> The work of Bleek and Lloyd, had, Skotnes argued, allowed “the recording of what made /Xam people uniquely /Xam: their intellectual world and their traditions”.<sup>15</sup>

In this dissertation, I probe the notion of the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks as a “collaborative document”, and examine the nature of the archive not only as “thing”, but also as process.<sup>16</sup> As well as situating the archive in terms of its broad political and ideological use as an effective technology of colonial control, I show the archive too as a private, highly intimate expression of personal identity. By this I mean the way in which the making of the archive was strongly influenced by the specific interests of the archivists and researchers who contributed, traced and collated materials.

In public, the archive is remade through the various public interpretations of archival material which may include published texts, performance, image – either separately, or in a combination of these. Projects of knowledge production which have shaped and been shaped by processes of archive formation can be discerned by linking those motives (of individuals, such as curators) and environments (such as political or social influences) which underlie and contribute to the manner in which the archive is solidified, and to the manner in which archival elements are re-deployed in public spheres. Closely tracking the ways in which components of the archive have been redeployed in public and published forums since the original research encounters between Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd and their /Xam dependents, provides the opportunity to link these re-deployments to underlying social and political milieus. It amounts to taking the wraps off archival practice, and in so doing, revealing to scrutiny the relations between form (rules of cataloguing and classification) and function (meanings residing in archived materials) in an institution which has tended to be regarded as an authoritative, finite expression of the past. Against the background of the

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(removed from display) towards the end of 2003 to make way for the reconfigured rock art exhibit /QE – *The Power of Rock Art, Ancestors, Rainmaking and Healing*.

<sup>14</sup> Skotnes, “Bushman Representation”, 260.

<sup>15</sup> Skotnes, “Bushman Representation”, 259.

history of the formation of the Bleek collection, an examination of the re-deployment of its elements over the years, contributes to an understanding of the role of the archive and to its increasingly important place as institution of memory for the post modern, postcolonial, post-apartheid world.

By revealing the archive as site of ethnography and indeed, as process rather than place, I show how the Bleek-Lloyd materials become inserted into the master narrative of the nation, which narrates the past as a story about the triumph of the human spirit over adversity.<sup>17</sup> In asking how it has become possible for the material (notebooks, images, and so on) – the result of an encounter between colonised and coloniser, to become re-deployed and presented as a redemptive interaction, in which roles are romanticised and hero-ised, and disturbing/uncomfortable aspects downplayed, I follow Verne Harris in complicating ideas about the archive as viable site of public memory and national reconciliation for a post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>18</sup>

## **Beneath the documents**

MY task is to deconstruct the archive, to peel away the surface layer which presents itself most readily to interpretation, and to look beneath at the people, politics and poetics which contributed to the making of the archive in the form in which we find it today. This investigation will reveal a new cast of characters in relation to the Bleek-Lloyd archive. First, there are the people who contributed different materials to the archive at different times. Second, there are the archivists, curators and librarians who over many years have been involved with the collation, cataloguing and classifying of materials. Finally, there are writers, researchers and academics whose writings around the collection have contributed, and continue to contribute to the kinds of knowledges the archive produces in the public sphere. In a nutshell, I want to look beneath the documents themselves, and to explore the ways in which history has organised, divided up, distributed, ordered and arranged certain documents, documents which may be

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<sup>16</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form", in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 83-100.

<sup>17</sup> For a view on the way in which transformed museums and other institutions or sites of heritage have structured exhibits to support the national narrative, see Crain Soudien, "Museums of Conscience: Whose role is it to remember?", paper presented to the South African Museums Associations conference (Cape Town, 1-3 June, 2004).

described as the residual materials of a past encounter between a colonial family and their “other”, in the persons of “bushman” prisoners from the Breakwater Prison.

My methodology includes archival research at all three institutions containing items associated with the Bleek collection. This has included looking at “primary” and “secondary” materials held at the Manuscripts and Archives department in UCT’s Chancellor Oppenheimer Library, where I have attempted to “read across the record”, looking not only at items in BC 151, the Bleek Collection, but also at the “overlapping” collection of papers belonging to Dr Otto Spohr. The German-born Spohr was librarian at Jagger Library during the 1960s and 1970s, and his research into the life and writings of Wilhelm Bleek, contributed a great deal of personal material (correspondence, photographs, newspaper articles written by Bleek) to the initial core collection of Bleek’s published works, manuscripts and personal library. I have also undertaken extensive research among the “ethnological” images at the National Library of South Africa, which includes photographs taken of the /Xam prisoners who worked with Bleek and Lloyd. Part of this research, which involved constructing an inventory of the images and contextualised them with a bibliography of relevant literature<sup>19</sup>, is presented here as a case study detailing the “social life” of certain images.

To begin with, I structure my deconstruction of the archive around a theoretical framework based on the writings of social and cultural historians, as well as postcolonial theorists. Also, I construct an historical overview and timeline of the Bleek-Lloyd research and their subsequent publishing projects (see Appendix 1). In detailing the nature of the research encounters between Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and their /Xam “dependents”, I hope to provide brief contexts for some of the leading agents who contributed material to the collection, against which to examine the parallel process of archive making. Next, I look at the collection itself, as well as correspondence and documents related to provenance and collecting activities, to track the various bequests which combined to form the collection. I use archival research and personal interviews and correspondence with librarians and curators to construct a picture of the way in

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<sup>18</sup> Verne Harris, “The Archival Sliver: A Perspective on the Construction of Social Memory in Archives and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.* Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 135-151.

<sup>19</sup> Jill Weintraub, “Images and the archival trace: tracking colonial ethnographic photography at the NLSA”, *postamble* Vol 1 No 2 (2005). on-line at: [www.africanstudies.uct.ac.za](http://www.africanstudies.uct.ac.za). [20 February 2006]

which materials have been organised or separated in relation to the making of the collection. This research has taken place at the Manuscripts and Archives and Rare Books and Special Collections departments in UCT's Chancellor Oppenheimer Library, at the African Studies Library at UCT, at the Special Collections division of the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town, and at the research library at the Iziko South African Museum, at various times during 2004 and 2005. Along with communicating personally, and via email and telephone, with some of the people charged with the management of the Bleek collection, I have also delved into certain provenance and correspondence files made by the archivists charged with its preservation and management. In attempting to track the various knowledges that have been produced by the archive at different times, I have examined some of the writings which have been generated as a result of research into various aspects of the collection.

## **Lived space**

BEFORE sketching the history of the Bleek collection, and describing how its component materials have been organised in the years subsequent to the production of the original notebooks during 1871 to 1884, this research is situated in terms of a brief biography of the original research project itself. As is well documented, Wilhelm Bleek graduated from Berlin University in 1851, having submitted in Latin, his thesis to the philosophical faculty, on the topic *De nominum generibus linguarum Africae Australis, Copticae, Semiticarum aliarumque secualium*.<sup>20</sup> This attempt to argue a link between the languages of the southern and northern regions of Africa, was the basis for Bleek's subsequent linguistic studies in southern Africa, initially among in Natal, and later, among Bushmen prisoners in Cape Town. The young Bleek was already well-versed in African languages upon his arrival in Durban in 1855. In Natal, Bleek assisted Bishop Colenso with compiling a Zulu grammar, and undertook his own research which involved living among the Zulu for a number of months. In total, Bleek spent 18 months in Natal before travelling to Cape Town at the end of 1856, where he took up a position as interpreter for the colonial government.

Bleek's move to Cape Town was to become permanent, as it was there that he met and married Jemima Lloyd, and settled down to become a husband and father to a

large family. The move to Cape Town proved providential, as it was there that Bleek gained access to the “bushman” prisoners who became the source of thousands of pages of language and folklore which was Bleek’s abiding research interest until his death in 1875. It was there too, that he formed his highly productive association with Lucy Lloyd, an association that was to culminate in their collaborative production of the internationally famous notebooks of /Xam language and folklore, with all the world-wide attention which these have earned since. For Bleek himself, the one-on-one research encounters with a succession of “bushman” prisoners, was to last a brief five years until his death in August 1875. For Lucy Lloyd, the research encounters proved even more productive, and continued for an additional nine years until 1884, when the young !Kung boy Da is recorded as leaving Mowbray.

Rather than provide a strictly chronological or biographical sketch of the research process and its major players, this outline is offered, after Derrida, as a means of situating the project in terms of, at times distinct and separate, at other times overlapping, psychological and geographical spaces. Geographically and psychologically, these spaces stretched between physical environments as far removed as the dusty northern Cape and colonial Cape Town, with genteel domestic life at Mowbray alternating with the punitive spaces of the Breakwater Prison. Throughout its duration, the research project, located within domestic, colonial life at Mowbray, was characterised by a great deal of movement in terms of the comings and goings of the various /Xam interviewees and the violence, injury, illness and death which at various times befell them and their close family members. The accompanying timeline (Appendix 1), reflects an attempt to tabulate a chronology of these comings and goings, and to integrate the research process with the flow of domestic life in the Bleek household. These domestic details of births and deaths must have been of great significance for both Bleek and Lloyd, and one imagines their research being affected in some way by such events. Domestic comings and goings would have included the family holiday in Kalk Bay, the change of venue of research encounters from Bleek’s study to the sitting room, as well as changes in the pace of research encounters.<sup>21</sup> An awareness of these domestic movements allows the archive to show progression,

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<sup>20</sup> O H Spohr, *Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek – A bio-bibliographical sketch* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1962), 2.

fluidity and dynamism in the development of relationships between the research subjects and Bleek and Lloyd.

In properly contextualising the initial research project, therefore, consideration needs to be taken of the wide gap that must have existed between the domestic scene at Mowbray, and life at the Breakwater Prison. The domestic scene at Mowbray is touched on in some scholarly writings.<sup>22</sup> I like to imagine the scene would include the Bleek children of various ages running around or playing near by, against the background of the regular sound of the clicking of the /Xam – a language so totally different to English speech patterns, carrying on regularly in the living room. I want to focus on the dislocation of the /Xam subjects themselves, for whom crossing the gap from colonial prison to genteel family home must have required an awesome readjustment. To the research work they must have brought the effects of months of poor nutrition, overwork and punitive conditions at the Breakwater Prison, and general malnourishment after years of starvation due to dispossession of their land. Woven into the texts and folktales therefore, was their trauma at the loss of loved ones and relatives to disease and colonial violence, and the more direct trauma of being personally witness to colonial violence at the prison, as well as in the form of commando raids in the Northern Cape at the time.<sup>23</sup> Including these details allows the framing of the research project in “lived space” – as a negotiated, dynamic interaction rather than an epic quest or salvage anthropology. Such an acknowledgement allows space to be found in the archive for the unknown, rupture and contradiction.

This discussion around psychological spaces should also take into consideration the support Bleek received from both his wife Jemima, and Lucy Lloyd, his sister-in-law. Without these two women, the former taking charge of domestic details, the latter assisting substantially in recording the /Xam narratives, he could not have fulfilled his intellectual ambitions so successfully. Not only did they support Wilhelm Bleek in his

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew Bank, “From Pictures to Performance: Early Learning at the Hill” in *Kronos* 28 (2002): 66-101.

<sup>22</sup> J DLewis-Williams, Ed., *Stories that Float from Afar: Ancestral Folklore of the San of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), 1-41. See also Martin Hall, “The Proximity of Dr Bleek’s Bushmen” in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), 143-159.

<sup>23</sup> Nigel Penn, “‘Fated to Perish’: The Destruction of the Cape San” in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), 81-91.

life, but also, in straitened financial circumstances, they continued the research project as long as they could after his death. Indeed, had it not been for the dedication of his wife in supporting Lloyd, and later his daughter Dorothea Bleek, in seeing to the posthumous publishing of Bleek's work, there is every chance that the /Xam records would have languished in obscurity, or been lost or destroyed.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, Wilhelm Bleek's passionate approach to his work must have inspired those around him, in particular Lucy Lloyd, whose interest and ability saw her making a substantial contribution to the transcription project begun by Wilhelm. Gifted in languages, Lucy Lloyd's notebook transcriptions stand as testimony to her proficiency in /Xam. While Bleek contributed 28 notebooks to the collection, Lloyd's contributed 125 notebooks. Notebook evidence suggested she developed a more informal interaction with the /Xam narrators than did Bleek.<sup>25</sup> Lloyd became curator of the Grey library after Bleek's death in 1875, and suffered the ignominy of earning half the salary of her predecessor. Some years later, she fought – and lost a court battle over her tenure at the library, eventually finding her position taken by Theophilus Hahn. Her material contribution to the “bushman researches” is reflected in the small collection of materials catalogued in her name at the National Library of South Africa, as well as in sub-sections of the Bleek collection at UCT.

However, the collection holds little documentation relating to the crucial role played by Jemima, although there is evidence of the stalwart way in which she partnered Wilhelm, supporting his work in the background, and enabling it to continue after his tragic early death. The evidence of the lively intellectual interaction as well as genuine affection shared between Wilhelm and Jemima is revealed in the thick file of courtship letters which are catalogued in the sub-section dealing with Wilhelm Bleek's correspondence at UCT's Manuscripts and Archives department.<sup>26</sup> While the Manuscripts and Archives list carries sub-sections cataloguing material related to both

<sup>24</sup> Compare with Foucault's invocation of “already existing discourses” which have survived through chance, or “through the care with which men have treated them, and the illusions that they have entertained as to their value and the immortal dignity of their words; but now they are nothing more than written symbols piling up in dusty libraries, slumbering in a sleep towards which they have never ceased to glide since the day they were pronounced, since they were forgotten and their visible effect lost in time” (1972: 121).

<sup>25</sup> Pippa Skotnes, “Introduction” in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), 15-23. See also Sigrid Schmidt, “Lucy Catherine Lloyd 1834-1914” in Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson, Eds., *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1996), 67-73.

<sup>26</sup> Jemima Bleek's courtship letters are at BC 151, C8.1-8.55.

Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek, and biographies of both these women, there is a silence around the contribution made by Jemima.<sup>27</sup> There is reference to a “Hottentot notebook” collected by J C Bleek during January and July, and September to November of 1879, in UCT’s catalogue. This entry is subsumed within the sub-section dealing with the notebooks recorded by Lucy Lloyd.<sup>28</sup>

## Chapter outline

THE structure of this dissertation and a summary of the way in which I have organised my research into respective chapters are provided in this chapter outline.

Postcolonial studies have provided a space broad and deep for theoretical considerations of the archive. In **Chapter 1**, I examine the work of leading international and South African cultural theorists and historians, and use their work to build a theoretical framework for my investigation into the Bleek collection. Writing from the perspective of literary studies, Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria associates the archive historically with the “proliferation of legal writing” which defined and regulated Spain’s conquest and colonisation of the New World.<sup>29</sup> He traces the first archive back to the construction of the great archive of Simancas, and argues that the urban-based, “meticulously organised administrative system” that Spain developed to control its new territories, would eventually assist in the overthrow of not only the aristocracies of the Old World, but of the conquistadors of the New.<sup>30</sup>

Foucault defines archive as the totality of discourses within a particular age, or the “domain of things said”.<sup>31</sup> For Foucault, the organisation of documents, and our relation to that organisation, are central to understandings of history.<sup>32</sup> The archive ascribes status to particular documents and structures them in a hierarchy and in specific relation to one another so that spontaneous interaction with documents is no longer possible. Foucault’s theories centralise studies of the past around orders of knowledge

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<sup>27</sup> See Etaine Eberhard, and Leonie Twentyman Jones, *The Bleek Collection, A List* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> See BC 151, A2.2.1.

<sup>29</sup> Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, *Myth and archive: A theory of Latin American narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 50.

<sup>30</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 48.

<sup>31</sup> Foucault, outside back cover.

<sup>32</sup> Foucault, 6-7.



rather than around people and events. Derrida argues for a deeper engagement with the archive as reflective of psyche (unknowability), as much as of the external management of documents.<sup>33</sup> Derrida figures the archive as an interaction or process between the intimate and personal (memory), the external and political (cultural, linguistic), and between the past and the future. In applying the principals of Freudian psychoanalysis to the archive, Derrida argues for the archive as mediating, like the psyche, between the ancestral or pre-existing past, and the experiential past. Like psychoanalysis, which gives scientific weight to anecdotal evidence, the archive provides the institutional weight which turns fragmentary, haphazard remnants of the past (which may be mythic or experiential), into material which gives rise to what researchers produce as continuous narratives.

The chapter also examines the special place of the archive in post-apartheid South Africa, its role previously in bolstering the apartheid state, and to the limits imposed by archival practice which includes the selection, exclusion and even destruction of documents. The complex role of the archive in a transforming South Africa, and in an increasingly global world, would not be complete without reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its perspective on previously suppressed pasts. Following the TRC, the archive in the “new” South Africa became a site for the expression and safe-keeping of a traumatic pasts, and where previously suppressed voices could be heard. In taking this position, the TRC became a place for the articulation of a new national narrative of triumph and reconciliation. In this positive configuration, however, the archive seems to draw limits around which areas of the past can be remembered, and which voices heard. Finally, Chapter 1 ends with a special examination of the relationship between the historian and the archive, elucidating aspects such as the disciplining effects of language on experience, and the possibility of “raw” history.

**Chapter 2** addresses the imperialist and colonial environments within which the Bleek and Lloyd “bushman researches” were situated, and discusses the effect these had on the psycho-intellectual spaces within which the interactions took place. The making of the collection is situated within the context of the stretched chronological,

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<sup>33</sup> Jacques Derrida. *Archive Fever – A Freudian Impression* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

geographical (physical) and intellectual (psychological) spaces encompassed by the research. The chapter looks at the Bleek-Lloyd materials which are held at the National Library of South Africa, and at the Iziko South African Museum. Both Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek were closely associated with the library through their terms as curators of the Grey Collection, a library built up by the colonial governor Sir George Grey, which he later presented to the Cape colony. Chapter 2 describes the various materials in each institution's holdings, suggests how they came to reside in each of the collections in question, and documents the kinds of curatorial practices and trajectories which they have been subjected to. It pays particular attention to a series of anthropometric photographic images of certain Breakwater prisoners including //Kabbo, which is held in the National Library's "ethnological" album collection. After Derrida, the chapter locates the archival materials in terms of the broader psychological as well as geographical spaces they may be representing. This chapter further examines the early gendering of the collection as a result of its genesis in the gentleman's collection of books owned and curated by Wilhelm Bleek.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the making of the collection at UCT, which today holds the largest collection of materials, including the notebooks, in its Manuscripts and Archives department. It describes the crucial contribution of Dorothea Bleek, as well as the role of UCT librarian Otto Spohr, whose research in the 1960s privileged the contribution of Bleek at the expense of that of Lloyd. In his writings, Spohr framed Bleek first as an adventurer in the tradition of the great African explorer, and later as a liberal intellectual and writer. In revealing the details of Spohr's dogged determination to find biographical material on Bleek, this chapter shows the process of archive making to be, at times, purposive and dictated by personal interest and identity, as well as at other times haphazard and open to chance. It shows further that confusion and spontaneity may often be found at the heart of the archival project of order, structure and classification. The "rediscovery" of the notebooks during the 1970s speaks not only to a new "founding" moment for the collection, but also to the different values ascribed at different times to the various elements of the collection.

**Chapter 4** investigates the different interpretations which have emanated from the Bleek collection over the years. It discusses how the Bleek-Lloyd materials have become part of constructions of knowledge in the service of a range of academic

disciplines including philology and language studies, “native” studies and anthropology, and archaeology and the interpretation of rock art. Finally, in **Chapter 5**, the recasting of the Bleek-Lloyd archive as surviving evidence of a “vanished people” and “lost” voices, as well as place for the articulation of a “new” national identity, is discussed. This chapter also addresses the international status given to the notebooks and related materials as “memory of the world”. In conclusion, the chapter discusses the process by which material research gathered as part of a colonial project of racial typologising becomes recast in the postcolonial moment as triumphant founding narrative for a transformed nation.

## Chapter 1:

### Disciplining Documents; Myth, history and archive making

*"The Archive is a modern myth based on an old form, a form of the beginning. The modern myth unveils the relationship between knowledge and power [as contained in all previous fictions about Latin America], the ideological construct that props up the legitimacy of power [...] The Archive keeps, culls, retains, accumulates, and classifies, like its institutional counterpart. It mounts up, amounts to the law, the law of fiction."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Generally speaking, the analysis of discourse operates between the twin poles of totality and plethora. One shows how the different texts ... refer to one another, organise themselves into a single figure, converge with institutions and practices, and carry meanings that may be common to a whole period. Each element considered is taken as the expression of totality to which it belongs and whose limit it exceeds. And in this way one substitutes the diversity of the things said a sort of great, uniform text, which has never before been articulated, and which reveals for the first time what men 'really meant' not only in their words and texts, their discourses and their writings, but also in the institutions, practices, techniques, and objects that they produced."*<sup>2</sup>

AT the start of this project, I want to engage first with the special theoretical conditions pertaining to the Bleek collection as an archive defined by its geographical and political position at the southern tip of Africa. Indeed, the formation and re-making of the archived materials associated with the "bushman researches" undertaken by Bleek and Lloyd follows a trajectory closely aligned with the social and political evolution of South Africa, which developed from colonial outpost, to independent apartheid state, and finally returning to the postcolonial, global world. Even today, the collection remains imbued with traces arising from the origination of its core documents during the height of imperialism at the Cape, when ties with metropolitan Britain were close, and the new human sciences of anthropology and psychology were beginning to be

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<sup>1</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, Roberto. 1990. *Myth and archive: A theory of Latin American narrative*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 18.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Transl., A M Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989), 118.

formalised into academic disciplines.<sup>3</sup> Such traces of colonialism coexist alongside newer deployments of the notebook texts and related materials in the service of post apartheid nation building and the assertion of postcolonial identities.

Many contemporary theorists have found documents and their place of storage – the archive, to be at the heart of the imperial project, as well as convenient key to the formation of new (or forgotten) identities in the postcolonial moment. The Bleek archive, as this research will show, has provided material not only to bolster the formation of the colonial other, the interpretation of rock art for a metropolitan (non-indigenous) audience, and finally in the present, to assist in the formation of post-apartheid indigenous identities and political aspirations. Indeed, this dissertation will show that it has been possible for the Bleek archive at different times, to service the production of knowledges as diverse as philology, “Bantu Studies”, archaeology, linguistics, literature, and most recently, an avenue into authentic, indigenous African pasts providing a narrative of redemption with global access for the whole of humanity.<sup>4</sup>

How can we theorise the archive in ways that take into account its malleability, and the ease with which it accommodates, even feeds, changing epistemes?<sup>5</sup> This research, which examines the “life” of the Bleek collection, attempts to put into practice arguments put forward by Stoler in favour of an inquiry that engages with the archive not simply as site of knowledge retrieval, but as a site of knowledge production.<sup>6</sup> Stoler points importantly to the archive as both “supreme technology of the late nineteenth century imperial state” as well as “telling prototype of the postmodern one”.<sup>7</sup> As this research will show, core materials from the Bleek collection (the notebooks), albeit created in fulfilment of a colonial project of classifying racial types, are now being put to work in service of claims to African indigeneity, triumphalist narratives for the new South African nation, as well as universalised postcolonial identities.

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<sup>3</sup> See Saul Dubow, *Illicit Union – Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to Nick Shepherd for suggesting this line of inquiry.

<sup>5</sup> I use this term after Foucault to refer to an overarching system of thought that has points of contact with ideology, but that encompasses intersecting structures of discourse. See also Jeremy Hawthorn, *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (London: Arnold, 2001), 106.

<sup>6</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 84.

<sup>7</sup> Stoler, 89.

Following Foucault, Stoler argues for a critical engagement with the making of documents, and how they are used. She calls on researchers to “capture that which renders colonial archives both as documents of exclusion and as monuments to particular configurations of power in themselves”.<sup>8</sup> Critical histories of the colonial need to take cognisance of “a politics of knowledge that reckons with archival genres, cultures of documentation, fictions of access and archival conventions”.<sup>9</sup> This dissertation, after Stoler, undertakes a “refigured” use of the colonial archive, one which pauses at, and reveals rather than bypasses, archival conventions and practices, “its unspoken order, its rubrics of organisation, its rules of placement and reference”.<sup>10</sup> This research is, in addition, mindful of Stoler’s warning that documents and archives “are still invoked piecemeal and selectively to confirm the colonial invention of traditional practices or underscore cultural claims”.<sup>11</sup> As will be shown, there is a degree to which selective readings of Bleek materials have contributed to an heroic, romanticised and nostalgic view of research interactions which may actually have been forced, fragmented, even uncomfortable, at times.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, this examination of the Bleek collection provides evidence of the degree to which the archive is “porous to societal processes and discourses”.<sup>13</sup> Through an examination of the formation and re-making of the Bleek collection, this research engages with “the taken-for-granted, often implicit ‘archive’” which is implicated in the production of knowledge in the present, is deployed in the project of identity formation in the present, and which makes possible “imaginings of community in the future”.<sup>14</sup> Thus, instead of mining the archive for facts, this research pays attention to the particular processes by which the record was produced and subsequently shaped and altered over time.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Stoler, 89.

<sup>9</sup> Stoler, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Stoler, 85, 94.

<sup>11</sup> Stoler, 84.

<sup>12</sup> See Andrew Bank, “From Pictures to Performance: Early Learning at the Hill” in *Kronos* 28 (November 2002), especially 66-72 for a discussion around romanticised interpretations of early research encounters between Bleek and /A!kunta.

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, “Introduction” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Hamilton, Harris and Reid, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, Harris and Reid, 9. On the notion of mining the archive, I am mindful of the work of Fred Wilson as presented in Lisa G Corrin, *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson* (New York/Baltimore: The New Press/The Contemporary, 1994). Wilson works with museum collections and attempts to problematise through visual display techniques, the fragmentations, ruptures and silences

## Metropolis as archive

IN their special issue on the city of Johannesburg, Mbembe and Nuttall urge scholars to work with “new archives – or even with old archives in new ways” as part of their impassioned plea for a “profound reinterrogation of Africa as a sign in modern formations of knowledge”.<sup>16</sup> As their contribution to this process, the authors propose to use “the metropolis itself” as their archive, allowing them to “express life in motion”, and providing space in which to use new critical pedagogues to draw on multiple sites of writing, talking, walking and so on, and so to “overturn predominant readings of Africa”.<sup>17</sup> In this dissertation, the notion of the “metropolis as archive” is adapted and a practice of “reading across the record” is employed to examine the ways in which aspects of archival formation and practice have contributed to many different interpretations of Bleek material. In using the phrase “reading across the record”, I am signalling the need for a multi-disciplinary engagement with the archive in which material elements (such as documents and visual materials, for example) are accessed in a way that moves beyond naturalised classificatory distinctions such as those drawn, for instance, between “primary” and “secondary” materials, and takes into consideration simultaneously, those contingent aspects of archive formation which underpin the documents themselves. It is this process of interactive engagement with archival materials that I would align with Mbembe and Nuttall’s idea of “life in motion” in which the active engagement of writing, talking and walking the city becomes the basis from which dynamic new readings of culture and identity could flow.

Mbembe and Nuttall’s notion of the “metropolis as archive” makes a productive association between the city and the archive, an association which is elaborated by literary theorist Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria. Examining the relationship between writing and the “city”, or civilisation, Gonzalez Echevarria argues that writing “begins in the city with the need to order society and to discipline in the punitive sense”.<sup>18</sup>

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contained within the museum collection or archive, and the way such collections are impregnated with and reflect the selections, exclusions, power relations and social conditions which contributed to their making.

<sup>16</sup> Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall.. “Writing the World from an African Metropolis”, *Public Culture* 16 (3) (2004): 352.

<sup>17</sup> Mbembe and Nuttall, 352.

<sup>18</sup> Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria. *Myth and archive: A theory of Latin American narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3.

Gonzalez Echevarria's elaboration of the relationship between writing, the city and its need for order and discipline, points to the connection between writing and the law. Gonzalez Echevarria tracks the "coeval" development of history and the novel by situating the narration of their respective founding mythologies at the core of both the novel and history as forms of writing in Latin America.<sup>19</sup> At the origin is not an "empty presence", but "a variety of beginnings" which constitute the archive.<sup>20</sup> It is this presence of the archive or "variety of beginnings" which negates the possibility of a fresh start, "unfettered by history". "The new start", argues Gonzalez Echevarria, "is always history; writing in the city".<sup>21</sup> Expanding on his notion of the co-emergence of the novel and of Latin American history simultaneously in the sixteenth century, Gonzalez Echevarria elaborates his notion of the multiple origins of writing by drawing on the novel's enmeshed relationship with the document.<sup>22</sup> In doing this, he situates writing within the archive as composite of documents.

Latin American narrative reflects how discourse was supplanted successively by law, science and finally anthropology as modernity progressed. Gonzalez Echevarria's analysis of the source and meanings of Latin American narrative shows it to be reflective of the "discursive totality" of a given epoch – equating it thus with Foucault's archive. The Latin American narrative, beginning life – with history, in the embryonic establishment (in law) of the New World, coming of age during the age of discovery, empire and the scientific travelogue, in its modern manifestation appears to be "writing back" to empire.<sup>23</sup> This "unwriting", as Gonzalez Echevarria succinctly coins it, "unwinds the history told in the old chronicles by showing that history was made up of a series of conventional topics, whose coherence and authority depended on the codified beliefs of a period whose ideological structure is no longer current".<sup>24</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria's elaboration of the nature and interconnectedness of writing, from history to law to literature and the novel, throws into stark relief the arbitrary divisions made among and between texts, divisions according to which certain documents attain the

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<sup>19</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 4-6.

<sup>21</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 12-13. See also Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), especially chapters 3 and 4, in which she argues that progressive changes in the style and tone of travel writing can be shown to correspond to shifts in the discourses of exploration, discovery, imperial conquest and finally, colonial extraction.

<sup>24</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 15.



status of “truth”, while others are consigned as “literature”. Such boundaries have fundamentally influenced the archive and its structure, as well as the way in which texts continue to be viewed in terms of naturalised categories related to a perceived status derived from a pre-existing “truth”.

Through tracking the presence of the archive as literary device in the modern Latin American novel, Gonzalez Echevarria arrives at a definition in which the archive “stands for writing, for literature, for an accumulation of texts that is no mere heap, but an *arche*, a relentless memory that disassembles the fictions of myth, literature and even history”.<sup>25</sup> For Gonzalez Echevarria, then, the archive figures centrally in Latin American narrative as a means of mediating the relation between writing and knowledge production. It should alert us to the “paradoxes inherent in the Archive as repository of history”.<sup>26</sup> Far from containing “truth”, what the archive contains at its source, is, rather, the confusion of writing born of the interrelation between myth, fiction and history. The “order that prevails in the Archive ... is not that of mere chronology, but that of writing; the rigorous process of inscribing and decoding ... a linear process of cancellations and substitutions, of gaps”.<sup>27</sup>

## Myth and discourse

IN considering the creation of the Latin American novel as writing, then, Gonzalez Echevarria confronts us with the possibility “that the Archive may very well be the most powerful of cultural retentions and the origin of the novel. The Archive is ... a repository for the legal documents wherein the origins of Latin American history are contained, as well as a specifically Hispanic institution created at the same time as the New World was being settled. [...] The Archive and the novel appear at the same time and are part of the same discourse as the modern state.”<sup>28</sup>

Gonzalez Echevarria’s reading, then, situates the archive as a feature of modernity, and cements its relationship to the modern city, the state, and the legal

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<sup>25</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 23.

<sup>26</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 23-24.

<sup>27</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 23-24. Gonzalez Echevarria’s analysis is here based on his reading of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *Cien años de soledad*, which he describes elsewhere (18) as the “archetypal archival fiction”. In particular, it is the presence of two books or “masterbooks”, the *Encyclopedia* and *The Thousand and One Nights*, in Borges’s study, which give material form to the paradox at the heart of the archive. The encyclopaedia is “a figure of the totality of knowledge as conceived by the West”, while *The Thousand and One Nights* “stands for a beginning in fiction, or beginning as fiction”.

<sup>28</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 29-30.

frameworks regulating the development of both the city and its subjects, within the colonial setting of the New World. This is the archive that allowed the systems of knowledge that structured the Old World, to reproduce themselves for the New. Along with asserting the intertwined presence of founding myth and history at the origins of the New World, he makes clear the ambivalent, contradictory and fragmentary nature of both these types of writing, and their implication as modes of knowledge production for the colonising world. The archive encompasses both “myth as an expression of so-called primitive cultures” as well as the “myths of modern society: the book, writing, reading, instruments of a quest for self-knowledge that lie beyond the solace mythic interpretations of the world usually afford”.<sup>29</sup> It is this blurring of history and myth at the origins of archive, its enmeshment with the city and the modernising project and legitimisation of power, that informs my research into the making of the Bleek collection. The foregoing discussion framing archive within the development of Latin American writing and its enmeshment in both myth and history, has elucidated, for me, a view of the Bleek collection as inseparably linked to both modernity and the city via its containment within the archive. In this reading, the Bleek collection, constituted as it is by a series of recorded imaginings previously tied to the /Xam landscapes of the northern Cape, now contained and limited by writing and labelling – the archival practices of the metropole, becomes irrevocably symbolic of a codified “other”.

In mapping out a broad theoretical framework for my study of the Bleek-Lloyd archive, I explore sections of Foucault’s provocative and wide-ranging arguments around the formation of discourse and its relationship to systems of language, as set out in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. To begin with, it is necessary to situate this theoretical discussion in terms of Foucault’s amorphous and polyvalent framing of the archive as containing or limiting discourse, and of discourse as both limiting and containing the archive. For Foucault, the archive is “first the law of what can be said”, that which pre-exists discourse, sets the terms and limits of a particular discourse, and that which “differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration”.<sup>30</sup> Put in another way, the archive “reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification”.<sup>31</sup> Much more than simply a physical location in which documentary material is stored, the

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<sup>29</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 29.

<sup>30</sup> Foucault, 128-129.

archive is the system underlying thought and language, that which allows or limits what is, or can be, said about what has been done.

Thus, the archive is enmeshed with the past, it contains the past, but also carries it forward, and it determines how the past is to be rendered in discourse. For Foucault, there can be no productive engagement with the past without an engagement with the archive. History is defined in terms of the way documents are gathered, ordered and stored, and this may take place either spontaneously or “in a consciously organised form”.<sup>32</sup> In my interpretation, Foucault’s argument forces emphasis to fall on documents in and of themselves, rather than on the interpretation, truth-value or meaning (“expressive value”) of documents.<sup>33</sup> We cannot, therefore, in terms of Foucault’s thesis, understand history from a simple, surface reading of documents (or statements), but must also pay attention to the manner in which “history has altered its position in relation to the document”, such that “history” no longer merely interprets, or understands the document, but rather “organises the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations”.<sup>34</sup> What is being elucidated here is a distinction between the *ad hoc* use of memory, against the purposive work associated with the preparation, collection and storage of documents. Instead of merely attending to document as “an inert material through which [history] tries to reconstitute what men have done or said”,<sup>35</sup> we are to actively trace the trajectories of documents and take into consideration the implications this might have for our interpretation of such documents. Along with engaging with texts or contents of documents, we need also to question why such documents have been retained, and whether this might be at the expense of other documents which may have been discarded.

Foucault’s switch of emphasis is crucial. We cannot simply accept documents as “memory”, for which “anthropological justification” has provided an acceptance of the past as residing in an “age-old collective consciousness that made use of material

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<sup>31</sup> Foucault, 130.

<sup>32</sup> Foucault, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Foucault, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Foucault, 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Foucault, 6-7.

documents to refresh its memory”.<sup>36</sup> Instead, in Foucault’s radical shift of focus, we are to seek an understanding of the past, rather, by attending to the “work expended on material documentation”.<sup>37</sup> It is about how documents are organised as much as it is about the presumed significance or particular narrative of the past that is encoded in these documents. Foucault’s approach thus forces attention to be paid to subtle and underlying currents of the past as well as to particular and specific events or personalities at the surface. By currents of the past, I mean the climate of ideas prevailing at the different times during the making and re-making of collections of documents. These ideas may be subtle, such as Darwinian ideas about evolution or Enlightenment ideas about civilisation and progress, or more materially impactful, such as the projects of imperial expansion and colonialism. We need to attend to layers of thought and trajectories of practice as well as to the events and people through which the past is more commonly engaged.

Such a focus on the past (configured by a series of processes around the organising of documents), allows for an open-ended engagement with that past combined with an acknowledgement of the presence of contradiction, fragmentation and silence, as opposed to the finality associated with the more conventional engagement with historical documents as finite objects from which the past can be extracted. In attending to process rather than object, we are encouraged to acknowledge the limits and conditions of our own relationship to that past, as well as the role of power and ideology in framing our engagements with that past. As argued by Gonzalez Echevarria, we begin to engage with the archive as “not so much an accumulation of texts as the process whereby texts are written; a process of repeated combinations, of shufflings and reshufflings ruled by heterogeneity and difference. It is not strictly linear, as both continuity and discontinuity are held together in uneasy allegiance. This fictional archive ... is a turning inside out of the Archive in its political manifestation, a turn that unveils the inner workings of the accumulation of power.”<sup>38</sup>

Applying Foucault’s theories to this study of the Bleek collection means that issues of archival practice will need to underpin interpretations and re-deployments of the materials contained therein. As has been stated in the introduction to this

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<sup>36</sup> Foucault, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Foucault, 7.

dissertation, much public and academic attention has been paid to texts emanating from the Bleek collection. Less attention has been paid to the particular details of how the various elements of the collection came to be stored in three different Cape Town institutions, neither to the relative values which have been applied to the different elements. In applying a deconstructive lens to my study, I pay attention to the making of the collection, and give attention to how its various components came to be gathered together into the entity which has now attained material and interpretative solidity as the Bleek collection. In this project, I describe in detail the making of the Bleek collection, and explore interconnections between the physical organisation of documents and the modes in which the collected documents have been presented in the public domain. This is done to give a practical dimension to the range of theories explored in this chapter.

## After Linnaeus

THE archive, then, is central to an engagement with the past, but as we say this, we must remember Foucault's very broad definition of the archive as the "domain of things said".<sup>39</sup> This definition draws out Foucault's perception of the broad relation between archive and discourse. Foucault proceeds by pointing to the existence of organising principals which underlie both the components of discourse as well as the arrangements of documents, noting that these comprise statements, concepts and language arranged in "a vertical system of dependences".<sup>40</sup> This "vertical system of dependences" derives its design from the "deductive architecture" or family of concepts which emerged in the work of Linnaeus.<sup>41</sup> Foucault credits the new thinking, which emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as ushering in an entirely new view of the world in which objects which had previously been accepted as arbitrary and spontaneous, were now seen to be based on order, structure, succession and dependence.<sup>42</sup> Now, "concepts were not formed directly against the approximative, confused, and living background of ideas, but on the basis of forms of coexistence between statements; and ... the

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<sup>38</sup> Gonzalez Echevarria, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Foucault, outside back cover.

<sup>40</sup> Foucault, 73-75.

<sup>41</sup> Foucault, 56. Carolus Linnaeus (23.5.1707-10.1.1778) developed the system of describing and grouping plants and later animals, systematically according to species and genus. His most important work, *Species plantarum, exhibentes plantas rite cognitatas, ad genera relatas, cum differentiis specificis, nominibus trivialibus, synonymis selectis, locis natalibus, secundum systema sexuale digestas*, was published in Berlin in 1753 (See W J De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Bibliography*, Vol I (Johannesburg: National Council for Social Research, 1968), 473-476. The model for naming and describing the relationship between plants described therein remains in use.

<sup>42</sup> Foucault, 57.

modalities of enunciation were described on the basis of the position occupied by the subject in relation to the domain of objects of which he is speaking”.<sup>43</sup> After Linnaeus, it was not simply the *act* of knowing, but instead the *process* by which knowledge was ordered, classified and hierarchised, which so profoundly influenced all subsequent thought about the world. Ideas could no longer compete and interact in spontaneous and creative chaos. Furthermore, what was said no longer had meaning independent of the position of the subject who was speaking. The emergence of scientific knowledge meant that a hierarchy had been set up in which subject could be distinguished from object, and relative values assigned to each based on the distance (or difference) perceived between them. Foucault framed the discipline of natural history as “not simply a form of knowledge that gave a new definition to concepts like ‘genus’ or ‘character’, and which introduced new concepts like that of ‘natural classification’ or ‘mammal’; above all, it was a set of rules for arranging statements in series, an obligatory set of schemata of dependence, of order, and of successions”.<sup>44</sup>

For Pratt, the “Linnaean watershed” amounted to a “planetary consciousness” which influenced the anecdotal forms of knowledge emerging from the colonies to become re-cast as scientific knowledge.<sup>45</sup> That planetary consciousness began also to be expressed, first in Europe, in terms of a trajectory of collecting practices which developed from private expression of princely identity, through public expression of an homogenised citizenry loyal to the nation state, and thence to structure imperialist notions of civilisation and human progress. These collecting practices later found expression in emerging public museums, where they coalesced around the display of objects ranged in terms of the Linnaean order of objects, and more subtly, around concepts of self and other.<sup>46</sup>

The sense of an underlying structure pre-existing in discourse makes a useful paradigm in which to consider relationships between archive and researcher, researcher

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<sup>43</sup> Foucault, 72-3. For Foucault’s use of the term enunciation, I am aware of the distinction made in French “between the particular time-bound *act* of making a statement, and the verbal result of that act, a result which escapes from the moment of time and from the possession of the person responsible for the act”. See also Hawthorn, 105.

<sup>44</sup> Foucault, 57.

<sup>45</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 38-85.

<sup>46</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), chapter 5.

and material, archivist and material, and – deconstructing further, relationships between the different components of the collection itself, such as image and text, manuscripts and published works. Setting up such a paradigm allows attention to be focused on the different spaces in which all these various relationships are constituted and aligned – most obviously with object and subject positions typically assigned by pre-existing discourses of scientific method. In archival practice, it is not merely the document that has meaning, but also the relative position given to the document in terms of the rules which govern the formation and organisation of archives. Thus, there is common agreement among researchers and archivists around concepts like “primary” and “secondary” materials and sources, and the relative value assigned to each of these. Similarly, by convention, published material is typically assigned to library shelves, while manuscripts, unpublished materials and non-book items are classified as “special” collections. Further, there is the problem of how items are hierarchised and given value within the space of the archive itself. Indeed, archival practice is intimately concerned with assigning value to material, and facilitating the transmission of such value over time.<sup>47</sup>

Foucault puts his finger on the particular, “different” space occupied by the archive, and analyses thereof. Both are somehow removed from daily life. “The analysis of the archive ... involves a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence; it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us.”<sup>48</sup> Here, Foucault is pointing to the underlying roles and relation of the collecting subject and the interpreting subject, mimicking those of curator and researcher. He also frames the archive as the object underlying manifest history – in the way that material is collated, organised, systemised with the needs of the researcher in tension with the demands of preservation and physical protection of materials. Underlying this is the subjectivity of the curator who needs to make the psychological split between the two divergent impulses – the need for preservation against the duty of access. Another layer is the practice of archival collection tending to consist of documents primarily, rather than objects/artworks/images, which are typically

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<sup>47</sup>, Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, “Introduction” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 16.

<sup>48</sup> Foucault, 130.

consigned to as institutions perceived as being in the business of “display”, such as museums and galleries. This practice is reflective of the classical, intellectual tradition which holds that text has more status than iconography (although this has changed fast in modernity).

If, as quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, Foucault’s aim is to reveal the “great, uniform text” which “men” have substituted for the “diversity of things said”, then my task in this dissertation, is to strip away accumulated layers of human action in the archive around those documents which have now coalesced as the Bleek collection, to reveal the diversity beneath.

### **The problem of hindsight**

ANOTHER fundamental problem of history is the problem of hindsight: the problem of the space between what was said (context, performance, power relativities), and the documentary record of that speech event – for example, the notebooks recorded by Bleek and Lloyd record only what was said by their research subjects. What materials the researchers used to elicit vocabulary and later folktales, needs to be pieced together from marginal notes and other materials.<sup>49</sup> Foucault frames this space as the tension between interiority and exteriority: “To undertake the history of what has been said is to re-do, in the opposite direction, the work of expression: to go back from statements preserved through time and dispersed in space, towards that interior secret that preceded them”.<sup>50</sup> There is also the problem of the subjectivity of the person accessing the record in question. “To undertake the history of what has been said is to re-do, in the opposite direction, the work of expression: to go back from statements preserved through time and dispersed in space, towards that interior secret that preceded them.”<sup>51</sup> The question is whether one’s subjectivity as, for example, researcher, allows one to take this journey. In the Bleek collection, for instance, the problem of colonialism is encoded in the research interactions between the researchers and their dependants. Thus the notebook texts are the product of a colonial encounter and colonial relations are encoded therein. The point of this dissertation is to elucidate the structuring effects of

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<sup>49</sup> See for example, Andrew Bank, “From Pictures to Performance: Early Learning at the Hill” in *Kronos* 28 (November 2000): 66-101, for a detailed reconstruction of interactions during the beginning stages of research encounters between Bleek, Lloyd and !A/kunta.

<sup>50</sup> Foucault, 121.

<sup>51</sup> Foucault, 121.



the archive and archival practice, to delineate the network of relationships structuring documents as a record of the past, and the archive as place of containment of such documents, and moreover, to reveal the structuring effects of this on interpretations of the past. As this dissertation tries to show, the archive has become overlaid with meanings arising from the subjectivities of the various curators and researchers who have worked on the collection over time.

For Foucault, the “interior secret” refers also to the (unwritten) psychological components that are encoded into interactions in the past, but which are not easily retrievable in the present. Responding to this more intimate dimension of archive is Jacques Derrida (1995), whose ground breaking *Archive Fever – A Freudian Impression* shifts theoretical work around the archive into the intensely personal domain of the human psyche.<sup>52</sup> Based on lectures written in celebration of the Freud archive itself, and constituting his (Derrida’s) homage to the historian of Judaism, Yerushalmi, Derrida anchors his discussion in the root meanings of the term archive. His deconstruction of the term points, on one hand, to the originary, the first, the principal in its physical, historical or ontological sense; and, in the nomonological sense, to the commandment, the law, on the other.<sup>53</sup> We are reminded here, therefore, of the archive as giving material form to, as well as representing the fruits of a metaphysical investigation into the nature of being – a journey into the self, if you will, as well as the role of the archive in limiting, delineating and controlling both the terms of the investigation, as well as its representations. In thus framing the archive, Derrida elucidates the tension and process of the archive of mediating between the private and the public, and its connectivity with both past and future.<sup>54</sup> For Derrida, Freudian psychoanalysis proposes a new theory of the archive:

It takes into account a topic and a death drive without which there would not in effect be any desire or any possibility of the archive. But at the same time, at once for strategic reasons and because the conditions of archivization implicate all the tensions, contradictions, or aporias we are trying to formalize here, notably those which make it into a movement of the promise and of the future no less than of

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<sup>52</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever – A Freudian Impression* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2.

recording the past, the archive must inevitably carry in itself, as does every concept, an unknowable weight ... The unknowable weight that imprints itself thus does not weigh only as a negative charge. It involves the history of the concept, it inflects archive desire or fever, their opening on the future, their dependency with respect to what will come, in short, all that ties knowledge and memory to the promise.<sup>55</sup>

I quote the preceding excerpt at length because I see it as encapsulating Derrida's use of language itself to characterise the contradictions, ruptures and disturbances which are inherent within the archive as much as in the psyche. For all the finality, objectivity and truth to which the western archive lays claim, the archive is in reality shot through with unfinished business, is as much tied to irrationality and indefinable "promise", as is the human mind. This deconstructive vision of archive takes further Foucault's focus on the ordering, interrelation and relative hierarchy of documents as structuring feature of the past, and archive as the pre-existing system of ideas which limits what can and cannot be said. We see that the ordering, structuring and expressing of archive through collection of documents, is subject to the ineffability of processes governing the human psyche, in short, our very own thoughts, feelings and consciousness.

In calling attention to the archive and Freudian psychoanalysis in the same breath, Derrida is reminding us how much the two are embedded in each other, and the relation of psychoanalysis's claims to science as against anecdote. We are reminded of Freud's invoking of "an analogy between two types of transgenerational memory or archive (the memory of an ancestral experience or the so-called biologically acquired character) and that we 'cannot imagine [vorstellen] one without the other'."<sup>56</sup> Derrida figures the archive as an interaction between the intimate or personal (memory) and the external and political (cultural, linguistic). These two forces "transgenerational and transindividual", transit through the archive, the "science of which is not at a standstill".<sup>57</sup> Like psychoanalysis, which gives scientific weight to anecdotal evidence, the archive provides the institutional weight which turns fragmentary, haphazard

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<sup>54</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2-5.

<sup>55</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 29-30.

<sup>56</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 35.

<sup>57</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 35.

remnants of past interactions, into material which gives rise to what researchers produce as continuous narratives.

Turning closer to home, to his visit to South Africa for the conference *Refiguring the Archive* in 1998, Derrida again talks of the double relationship of the archive “to the law of gathering and being true to the past ... and another essential, and unique, relation to the future”<sup>58</sup> As discussed in relation to Foucault, Derrida reiterates how the archive, rather than simply recording the past, also “constitutes the past, and in view of a future which retrospectively, or retroactively, gives it its so-called final truth”.<sup>59</sup> In dealing with the relation of archive and psyche, *Archive Fever* uses the concept of the latter as a metaphor to extend and broaden an apprehension of the former, allowing the incomplete and contradictory nature of both to come to the fore. By invoking an idea of the many places in the psyche in which traces are kept, we are reminded that “... the archive does not consist simply in remembering, in living memory, in amanuensis; but in consigning, in inscribing a trace in some external location – there is no archive without some location, that is some space outside. Archive is not living memory. It’s a location...” and it is this exteriority, “the very gesture which consists in keeping safe” which in turn allows the archive to be threatened, from the very beginning, by the possibility of destruction.<sup>60</sup> For Derrida, the archiviolithic power of the archive stems from conflict within the psyche, between its “economy of repression” and the “aneconomic death drive”, or the possibility of its radical destruction.<sup>61</sup> This, for Derrida, rests in the limitation of the archive in terms of which social and political powers are reflected in “selecting the traces in memory, in marginalising, censoring, destroying ... traces through precisely a selection, a filter, and which, of course, is made possible by ... the finitude, the limitation ... of human power, of space, the place where to accumulate the archive and so on”.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the ability of the archive to contain social memory ironically also provides the means to limit that memory, as well as the means to destroy that memory.

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<sup>58</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever in South Africa”, in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 40.

<sup>59</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 40-42.

<sup>60</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 42.

<sup>61</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 42-44.

Applying, as Derrida does, psychoanalytic methods and ideas to interpretations of the archive thus subverts notions of closure, and points to the fragmentary nature of archival holdings. The fragmentary, open-ended nature of the archive is further complicated by technological changes, which are particularly relevant in relation to the Bleek collection, which has been digitised and will be available in virtual form to on-line researchers during 2006.<sup>63</sup> Whether and how this will impact on the kinds of interpretations of Bleek-Lloyd material remains to be seen, however. Meanwhile, Derrida argues that “the mutation in technology changes not simply the archiving process, but what is archivable – that is, the content of what has to be archived is changed by the technology ... the way we experience what we want to keep in memory, or in archive ... is conditioned by a certain state, or a certain structure, of the possibility of archiving.” So, Derrida argues, the technological power of the archive determines the nature of what has to be archived. But because the content and the meaning of the archive is constantly reshaped by the archivist, the structure and meaning of the archive is dependent on the future.<sup>64</sup> Herein lies what Derrida terms the “messianicity” which is implied in the very experience of the archive – the expectation of what might happen or arrive in the future, which makes it impossible to close the archive: “It’s always possible to re-interpret an archive. And this future-oriented structure of the archive is precisely what confronts us with a responsibility, an ethical and political responsibility.”<sup>65</sup>

## **New technologies**

THE writings of two early theorists add productive ideas to complicate the notion of the archive in general, and the digital archive in particular. Both theorists were considering the implications of two distinct, but related technologies, both of which at the time promised to usher in entirely new ways of being in the world. These technologies, photography in the case of Siegfried Kracauer, and reproduction in the case of Walter Benjamin, can be seen as foreshadowing, and in some ways mirroring the effects of the digital revolution which is driving the need for new ways of negotiating the present. For Kracauer, photography made possible a means of capturing the real so that it became a

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<sup>63</sup> Personal communication with Stacy Riley. November 2005.

<sup>64</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Derrida, “Archive Fever in SA”, 46.

sign by which one could be reminded of the original.<sup>66</sup> The photograph – like the archived document, comes to stand between the real and the remembered. The proliferation of photography as a means of interacting with the past has allowed an internalisation of the “photographable present”.<sup>67</sup> This has come to structure and organise interactions with the past, in which the ambiguity and silence contained within the past are forgotten, and no longer reflected in its widely available photographic representation. Similarly, Benjamin examines the complex relationship between the original work of art and its reproduction, especially in relation to notions of authenticity and value. The original may be reproduced, but that reproduction has lost the “aura” derived from status and individuality, and is cast adrift from the “fabric of tradition” which gave it context. On the positive side, the reproduced artwork is free from exclusivity and accessible to the masses.<sup>68</sup> The relationship between the digital archive and its material precursor, is similarly complex. Thinking about the effects of photography, and reproduction in general, on the nature of art and history, provide interesting frameworks in which to consider the digitally constructed archive in general, and the digitised version of the notebooks and other Bleek-Lloyd materials in particular. The digital archive will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The archive, as this research will show, is as much about hopes and longings for the future, as it is about the past. One way to provide space for this fluid nature of the archive is to focus on and problematise the idea of an archival gap, to see the archive as a sliver rather than as an incomplete whole.<sup>69</sup> Commenting on a broader level in relation to the respective roles of archive and state, Harris argues for the notion of “the archival sliver” to reminds us of the selections, exclusions, and even destruction of records which are inevitably part of processes of archive formation.<sup>70</sup> An archivist rather than an academic, Harris is acutely aware of the limits imposed by archival practice, arguing that what archivists like to call “the record” is in practice “just a sliver of a window into an event”, that the record itself is “substantially reduced through deliberate and

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<sup>66</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography”, *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Spring 1993): 432.

<sup>67</sup> Kracauer, 433.

<sup>68</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, in *Illuminations*, (London: Pimlico: 1999), 211-217.

<sup>69</sup> Hamilton, Harris and Reid, 10.

<sup>70</sup> Verne Harris, “The Archival Sliver: A Perspective on the Construction of Social Memory in Archives and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 135-142.

inadvertent destruction by records creators and managers, leaving a sliver of a sliver from which archivists select what they will preserve”.<sup>71</sup> After Derrida, Harris argues for the “contradictory” and “always dislocating” nature of archive, and calls for a recognition of the relation between the known, classified, accounted for, against what is beyond or outside of the archive, the unknowable, unarchivable, the other.<sup>72</sup> The archive is being turned inside out by postmodernist epistemologies and the technological revolution, yet many archivists have yet to acknowledge “the devastating rebuttal of the notion long cherished ... that in contextualising text they are revealing meaning, resolving mystery and closing the archive”.<sup>73</sup> What needs to be acknowledged instead, argues Harris, is the Derridean framing of archival endeavour as being about “the releasing of meanings, the tending of mystery and the disclosing of the archive’s openness”.<sup>74</sup> What is needed is a recognition of the “blindness or limits residing at the heart of archival practice, the need to move away from binary oppositions such as knowledge or ignorance, self and other, reason against passion”.<sup>75</sup>

### **The post-apartheid archive**

NO discussion of the place of the archive in South Africa would be complete without consideration of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and its relation to notions of the archive as place where the uncovered, traumatic past may be kept safe for the present and future. It has been argued that in framing itself as “truth body” speaking for the previously silent, the TRC with its associated archival role, has positioned itself as site for the articulation of a new founding narrative for the transformed nation. Constituted thus as site of public memorial, the TRC has entered the contested ground of heritage. In choosing to speak for the victims of trauma, moreover, it has set limits around the kinds of pasts that will be exposed, and the kinds of narratives that emerge – thus bearing out Foucault’s theorising of the archive as setting limits on what can be said. Rassool *et al* cogently discuss the implications and contestations inherent within the archive configured as site of memorialisation and heritage, and where the trauma of

<sup>71</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 135-136.

<sup>72</sup> Verne Harris, “A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archive” in Hamilton, Carolyn, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 63.

<sup>73</sup> Harris, “A Shaft of Darkness”, 71.

<sup>74</sup> Harris, “A Shaft of Darkness”, 71.

<sup>75</sup> Harris, “A Shaft of Darkness”, 71-75.

the past may be committed for safekeeping so that healing can proceed into the future.<sup>76</sup> The reconstitution of the archive as “archive of truth”, repository of the nation’s pain, and site of national recovery, however, runs the risk of silencing the unsettled and unresolved nature of that past. The danger is that despite suggesting itself as an open avenue into the past, in its very constitution, the TRC as archive remains inherently interpretative, and prone to totalising nationalist narratives.<sup>77</sup> Brent Harris makes similar findings in his analysis of the role of the TRC and its archive in the production of history for the “new” South Africa. Constituted as representing the “rainbow” nation and providing a voice for the voiceless, the TRC’s task was to uncover a hidden (traumatic) past and, make space for a shared, reconciled future to be built on that past.<sup>78</sup> The corollary to these claims includes the TRC’s failure to address the structural and economic dimensions of apartheid, as well as apartheid’s legacy in terms of the construction and internalisation of racial categories. Both these areas remain intact – and uncontested in any coherent way, in the “transformed” nation, further underlining the efficiency of the TRC in setting limits to debates around the nation’s past, present and future. The “self-referential” work of the TRC allowed it to archive only “the evidence it required to support the history that it produced and, by archiving its evidence, it guaranteed the veracity of the history it produced”.<sup>79</sup>

As embodying thus, an important site for the articulation of a transformed founding narrative for the “new” South Africa, the TRC and its archive endorse “triumphalist” interpretations of South Africa’s transformed archives. In this paradigm, the notion of the archive as custodian of “the collective memory of the nation” muscles out the image of a fractured, shifting archival sliver.<sup>80</sup> The exclusions and silences inextricable to the act of archive-making remain in place in the stable, uncontested use of words like “archives”, “archivist”, “record”, holdings, custodian.<sup>81</sup> Arguing for Derrida’s vision of the unstable and dynamic nature of the archive as providing for its

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<sup>76</sup> Ciraj Rassool, Leslie Witz and Gary Minkley, “Burying and Memorialising the Body of Truth: the TRC and National Heritage”, in W James and L van de Vijver, Eds., *After the TRC: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), 125-127.

<sup>77</sup> Rassool *et al.*, 125-127.

<sup>78</sup> Brent Harris, “The Archive, Public History and the Essential Truth: The TRC reading the Past” in Carolyn Hamilton *et al*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 161-177.

<sup>79</sup> Brent Harris, 163.

<sup>80</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 149-50.

<sup>81</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 149-150.

very strength in the future, Harris believes the archive in South Africa awaits “a turning inside out by epistemologies that we might label ‘African’ or ‘indigenous’”.<sup>82</sup>

Verne Harris’s summation of the position of the archive in post-apartheid South Africa provides a useful and apt framing for my reading of the progression that can be detected in interpretations of the Bleek collection, an area I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. For Harris, the ground being contested as South African archives (and other institutions of social memory) negotiate and grapple with the issues of transformation, is the “very identity of archives”.<sup>83</sup> While the apartheid model for public archives – answerable only to the state, with operations largely opaque – has been firmly rejected, transformation has largely been experienced as an add-on approach, rather than a thoroughgoing change in paradigm. For Harris, a paradigm change would be one that recognises how the past may be embodied in other modes.<sup>84</sup> The proliferation of archives post-transformation, even though archives have been reconfigured as more transparent and accessible, is linked to a transformation discourse that “remains welded to a positivist paradigm rooted in the nineteenth-century birth of ‘archival science’”,<sup>85</sup> with the archive’s claims to authority and finality remaining largely uncontested.

## History and archive

THIS theorising of the complex role of the archive in a transforming South Africa, and moreover in an increasingly global world, would not be complete without special examination of the relationship between the historian and the archive. In considering the existence of “raw” history, White reminds us of the processes by which language and speech discipline individual experience into established national and social narratives, and of the “densely packed historical material” lying outside of language, which makes up individual participation in how the world is described.<sup>86</sup> Historians moreover regularly negotiate between contradictory accounts, adding layers of interpretation to an already mediated past, thus further complicating notions of “raw” history, and of the archive as repository of the past.<sup>87</sup> For Dirks, the archive, in relation to the discipline of

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<sup>82</sup> Harris, “A Shaft of Darkness”, 69.

<sup>83</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 144.

<sup>84</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 149-50.

<sup>85</sup> Harris, “The Archival Sliver”, 149-50.

<sup>86</sup> Luise White, “The Most Telling: Lies, Secrets, and History”, *South African Historical Journal*, 42 (November 2000): 17.

<sup>87</sup> White, 21.



history, is “constituted as the only space that is free of context, argument, ideology – indeed, history itself”.<sup>88</sup> Tracking the formation of the archive as part of the colonial project in India, Dirks maps shifts in the focus of archival documents from land and revenue, through “caste” to ethnography which came to define history for the colonial other. “Caste was used to explain and to classify, to predict and contain the potential unruliness and recalcitrance of colonial subjects; indeed caste became an alternative colonial civil society that made other kinds of civic institutions, let alone political rights, seem either unnecessary, or foreign, or both. As a result, the state and the archive became increasingly ethnographic.”<sup>89</sup> This framing reiterates the notion of the archive as crucial constituent in the making of the colonial other, an important theory in the context of this discussion of the Bleek collection.

Comprehensively theorised then, the archive becomes much more than a place for the storage of documents from the past. Indeed, it encompasses a complex location for setting possibilities and limits around the production of discourse and knowledge, for the enactment of national heritage, memorialisation, reconciliation and nation-building. It is site for the expression of myth, law, history and narrative, for the making of both the colonial other and postcolonial identities, as well as for the recovery of marginalised voices. Above all, the archive and documents contained therein, by their nature encode silence, contradiction and the unknown, the purposeful and scientific, the creative as well as the haphazard and spontaneous, as this story about the making of the Bleek collection will show.

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<sup>88</sup> Nicholas B Dirks, “Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History” in Brian Keith Axel, Ed., *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 48.

<sup>89</sup> Dirks, 54-58.

## Chapter 2:

# The Gendered Archive; Images, Objects and Two Institutions

*“The Bushman archive was the land itself – fragments of it still exist in the rock art – but as a coherent source of record it is no more. The collective memory to which there is common public access lies instead in the old colonial precinct in the centre of Cape Town where the National Gallery stands within hailing distance of the South African Museum, the South African National Library, the old National Archive and the Houses of Parliament...”<sup>1</sup>*

*“The drive by science to describe, measure, record and dissect Khoisan bodies in the nineteenth century found expression in diagrammatic drawings, anthropometric photographs, casts and collections of body parts. The image conjured up by the term ‘Bushman’ is generally not one which is contextualised by a specific history, or by heroic acts, by literature, or by political or power struggles. The image is one of physical type or specimen, defined under the rubric of science and of physical anthropology, and then rendered immutable through photography, museum exhibits, popular films, advertisements, novels and popular histories.”<sup>2</sup>*

WILHELM BLEEK lived a relatively short time, yet his name has been firmly associated with a collection of material which contains a great body of work carried out by his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd. Bleek died in 1875 at the age of 48, having been plagued by ill-health through most of his adult life, while Lloyd died in 1914 at the age of 80.<sup>3</sup> So, although a combination of longevity, interest and ability allowed Lloyd to make the more substantial contribution to the “bushman researches” she embarked upon initially to be of assistance to her brother-in-law, history or custom has chosen to name the surviving collection of materials for the male member of the research team. There has, however, been a sustained attempt in recent scholarship to acknowledge and pay

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Morphet, “Miscast” in *Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture* 6, 1 (1997): 99.

<sup>2</sup> Pippa Skotnes, “Introduction” in *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 20.

tribute to Lloyd's great contribution to the project. Leading this campaign has been Professor Pippa Skotnes, director of UCT's Michaelis School of Art, who established and is Director of LLAREC, the *Lucy Lloyd Archive Resource and Exhibition Centre*, a research centre based at Michaelis.<sup>4</sup>

Schoeman has argued that this was the result of self-effacement, reticence and family loyalty on the part of both Lucy Lloyd and of Bleek's daughter Dorothea.<sup>5</sup> When offered an honorary doctorate in 1936 by the University of the Witwatersrand, Dorothea is said to have declined this title, saying there could only be one Dr Bleek.<sup>6</sup> Family loyalty and the need to honour Wilhelm Bleek's memory were undoubtedly part of the reason why Lucy Lloyd, supported by Wilhelm's widow Jemima, and later Dorothea Bleek, continued the "bushman researches" so ably and avidly. Interest, a particular empathy (particularly in the case of Lloyd), and intellect, would also have played a role. Both Lloyd and Jemima Bleek were "not only extremely loyal to the memory of Bleek, but also aware of the importance of his work and the necessity of continuing it and making known the results".<sup>7</sup> They followed Bleek's injunction in his will to continue the work after his death, and their great loyalty is thus inscribed in the archived materials. But the reason why Wilhelm Bleek was until very recently, given the lion's share of credit for research substantially added to by his sister-in-law and daughter respectively, may have had something to do with the input of Otto Hartung Spohr, academic-turned librarian at UCT until the late 1970s. The German-born Spohr may have identified with Bleek on the basis of shared nationality and liberal political leanings, as I hope to show in detail in the following chapter.

In this section of my dissertation, I want first to situate the research project undertaken by Bleek and Lloyd, and the documents generated by them, in terms of a particular, and gendered, reading of both the spatial configuration and corresponding intellectual consciousness which prevailed during the early years of the Cape Colony,

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<sup>3</sup> Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson, Eds., *Voices from the Past - /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1991), 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/dynapage.jsp?id=23> [17 March 2003]. See also Skotnes, *Miscast*, 21, and the title page dedication

<sup>5</sup> Karel Schoeman, *A Debt of Gratitude: Lucy Lloyd and the 'Bushman work' of G W Stow* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1997), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson, Eds., *Voices from the Past - /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1991), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Schoeman, 37.

and which provided the overarching environment in which the research work took place. Further, I situate Bleek's research work within the classical traditions of the study of ancient languages, and of philology as an intellectual pursuit based on the study of such languages as the key to understanding the origins, and evolution, of humankind.<sup>8</sup> Thus, I try to give a sense of physical (institutional) place and intellectual space in which to situate the research work and resultant documents and materials.

## Language as marker

WORKING in Cape Town of the 1870s, Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd inhabited a British colonial enclave in terms of fashion and governance, while maintaining close intellectual links in the form of correspondence and literature, with their European antecedents. Their "bushman researches" took place within a gendered colonial environment structured by frontier wars, commando raids and typically violent relations between settlers and "bushmen".<sup>9</sup> They were also undertaken within the highly gendered intellectual tradition and context of the classical pursuit of philology. Indeed, the intellectual climate in which Bleek and Lloyd began their "researches" was part of a process of colonial "othering" which was taking place simultaneously in other regions of the world, and in which particular kinds of knowledges were being produced about "bushmen" as well as of other colonial peoples.<sup>10</sup>

I begin by offering a perspective on the intellectual and ideological traditions and influences in which Wilhelm Bleek was immersed. Bleek became interested in African languages during his doctoral studies in Semitic languages at the University of Bonn in the late 1840s.<sup>11</sup> His doctoral dissertation, presented to the philological faculty of the University of Bonn in 1850, was "an analysis of the gender systems of four African languages ('Kafir', Herero, Sechuana, and 'Hottentot'), in order to develop a

<sup>8</sup> For a perspective of Bleek's work in the context the development of physical anthropology in South Africa, see Saul Dubow, *Illicit Union – Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32-53.

<sup>9</sup> Nigel Penn, "'Fated to Perish': The Destruction of the Cape San" in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 81-91.

<sup>10</sup> For a view of the role of travel writing in this process, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). For a view of colonial expansion as a gendered process see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Conquest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 10-14.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Thornton, "'This Dying Out Race' W H I Bleek's approach to the languages of Southern Africa" *Social Dynamics*, Vol 9, No 2 (December 1983): 1.

universal theory of gender-type grammatical classification.<sup>12</sup> He compared Berber, Galla, Coptic and Ancient Egyptian with the languages of southern Africa in order to support his claim that Nama, which he called “Hottentot”, was related to those North African languages.<sup>13</sup> Bleek’s interest in language and philology was tied to the broader intellectual concerns of the day in which a scientific explanation was being sought to support evolutionary theories about race.<sup>14</sup> Bleek attempted to use language to track the “process of human development”, since through its study “the original skeleton of the entire history of human development is laid bare”.<sup>15</sup> Along with seeing grammar, vocabulary and phonology as markers of empires, migration, trade and intermarriage (or markers of progression on an evolutionary scale of language), he had an “abiding fascination with the idea that syntax and grammar offered solutions to the mysteries of the origin and the development of speech itself”.<sup>16</sup>

Bleek’s ideas about language, then, were intertwined with deep-seated philosophical ideas about the very origins of human beings. His thesis in relation to his studies of the /Xam was around the presence of the clicks as a marker of the language being “ancient”.<sup>17</sup> He was fascinated by the ways in which /Xam speech appeared to be related to animal sounds, and that his Bushmen informants attempted to imitate the shape or position of the mouth of the animal whose speech they were representing – thus the various clicks.<sup>18</sup> His theory was that the number of “uncouth and unpronounceable” or difficult sounds (like the clicks in /Xam) in a language was related to the age of that language, and a decreasing incidence of clicks meant that the language was progressing or modernising, and throwing “off the sounds which are difficult in pronunciation ... to render the phonetical mechanism of the language smoother. “In other words, languages became easier to speak because people stopped using sounds that they found difficult to make. Bleek thus reasoned that ‘languages [like /Xam] which abound in uncouth and unpronounceable sounds must be presumed to have best

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<sup>12</sup> Thornton, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Thornton, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Bank, “Evolution and Racial Theory: The Hidden Side of Wilhelm Bleek”, *South African Historical Journal*, 43 (November 2000): 163-178.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Bennun, *The Broken String: The Last Words of an Extinct People* (London: Viking, 2004), 37.

<sup>16</sup> Bennun, 37.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremy C Hollmann, Ed., *Customs and Beliefs of the /Xam Bushmen* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, n.d.), 311-12.

<sup>18</sup> Hollmann, 332.

retained the ancient phonetic features’.”<sup>19</sup> There is no support among linguists today for the idea “that languages are evolving from an earlier phonetically complex stage to a simpler one; neither is there any objective way to determine what speech sounds are difficult and unpronounceable”. Hollmann points out further that some of the Early Race sounds are in fact simplifications of /Xam speech rather than, as Bleek believed, evidence of prior complexity.<sup>20</sup>

Research materials thus produced within a gendered intellectual tradition, and amid a climate of colonial dispossession, were further structured by the institutions in which they came to reside for safekeeping. Today, the large collections of books, correspondence, diaries, notebooks, photographs, newspaper clippings and original paintings associated with the philological work of Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd, and Dorothea Bleek, are distributed among three institutions in Cape Town. These are the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town) (NLSA), the Iziko South African Museum (SAM), and the Manuscripts and Archives department of the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library at the University of Cape Town (UCT). All three institutions are located in or near the centre of the city of Cape Town, and two of them (the library and museum) are spatially arrayed along the city’s axis of political and cultural power.<sup>21</sup> Linkages between archive and city have been discussed previously. Furthermore, as Mbembe has argued, the material elements of the archive derive much of their power from the physical institutions in which they are stored.<sup>22</sup> Elements of the archive under discussion in this dissertation thus need to be grounded by referencing the institutions in which they are collected, institutions which began life as centres of knowledge production for the growing colony during the age of colonial expansion in the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bleek cited in Hollmann, 332.

<sup>20</sup> Hollmann, 332.

<sup>21</sup> See Noeleen Murray, *The Imperial Landscape at Cape Town’s Gardens*, (unpublished Master of Architecture thesis, University of Cape Town, 2001), for more provocative detail related to the spatial layout of the company gardens as axis of political and cultural power established during colonial times, and continuing to exude authority into post-apartheid times.

<sup>22</sup> Achille Mbembe, “The Power of the Archive and its Limits”, in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Note that while UCT is today geographically removed from the political and cultural heartland of the growing Cape colony, the university too began its life at Hiddingh campus which is situated directly behind the SA Museum. The university as presently constituted was established in 1918. It emerged alongside the South African College, a private high school for boys situated at the top of Government Avenue from 1829, and the University of the Cape of Good Hope which was established by state decree

The collections are further fragmented within individual institutions in terms of curatorial conventions, as will be discussed later in this chapter. These conventions of practice separate published materials from manuscripts and unpublished materials, and separate texts from images and objects. Collections are also separated on the basis of authorship, with correspondence relating, for instance, to Wilhelm Bleek being filed separately to that related to Lucy Lloyd, or to Jemima Bleek. The National Library has separate collections for Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, while at UCT, material relating to individuals is filed separately in sections named for each person. At the South African Museum, objects collected by Dorothea Bleek or related to the earlier research undertaken by her father, are filed in the museum's general inventory of objects, in a classificatory system based on geographical place of origin. Of the Bleek-Lloyd materials as a whole, only those materials held at the NLSA and UCT are included in the Bleek collection's *Memory of the World* citation.<sup>24</sup> The SA Museum's holding, which consists mainly of objects and artefacts, some of which are on "indefinite loan" from UCT<sup>25</sup>, has been excluded from Unesco's international site of documentary heritage and memory, *Memory of the World*.

## Two institutions

THIS part of my dissertation deals with two of the institutions in which materials are today housed – the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town branch), and the Iziko South African Museum. It discusses aspects of each institutional environment and suggests how and why certain materials came to reside in their respective places of safekeeping. This investigation begins at the National Library of South Africa, originally the Public Library of South Africa, where both Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, each served as curators of the Grey Library.

The institution now known as the National Library of South Africa had its roots in the South African Public Library which was established by Lord Charles Somerset,

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in 1873. See Howard Phillips, *The University of Cape Town 1918-1948, The formative years* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> *Guide to the National Library of South Africa*, NLSA booklet (Pretoria: National Library of South Africa, 2002): 21.

<sup>25</sup> Personal communication, Gerald Klinghardt, ethnographer, South African Museum: 29 October 2004.

governor of the Cape, in 1818.<sup>26</sup> It was financed through a tax on the sale of wine in the colony.<sup>27</sup> The Dessinian Collection, initially donated to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1761, became in 1820 the “founding collection” of the library, and secured its claim to having a “longer continuous history than almost any other library in the western world outside of Europe”.<sup>28</sup> This founding acquisition delineated at the outset the typically gendered nature of colonial institutions of knowledge. Described as a “gentleman’s library”, the Dessinian collection comprised some 4 500 volumes covering law, theology, medicine, philosophy, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, history, natural history, geography and philology.<sup>29</sup> It is in this tradition of the “gentleman’s library” that one may situate the collecting activities of Sir George Grey, whose substantial donation in 1861 of books, illuminated manuscripts and rare philological editions for the “education [of Cape Town’s] young men”, greatly enhanced the status of the fledgling public library.<sup>30</sup> As custodian of the Grey Collection from 1862 until his death, Wilhelm Bleek was thus immersed in the gentlemanly tradition of acquiring books from around the world, not only for the now publicly accessible Grey collection, but also for his private library. In this way, a private intellectual pursuit – the accession and classification of books and manuscripts, became public through the establishment of the library, in the same way that private papers became public documents through the establishment of the archive. Both institutions, as discussed earlier, became important technologies of colonial knowledge production and the establishment of and expansion of imperial power at the Cape colony.

## **The gentleman’s collection**

FURTHER contexts for Bleek’s work can be derived from the kinds of books he collected. In a light-hearted piece on the pleasures of book collecting, Walter Benjamin described it as highly personal, intimate and passionate pastime – as well as an

<sup>26</sup> Constituted in terms of the National Library of South Africa Act, no 92 of 1998, in which two previously separate institutions, the State Library in Pretoria, and the South African Library in Cape Town, are amalgamated into a single body with two campuses.

<sup>27</sup> A M Lewin Robinson, “The History of the South African Library” in C Pama, Ed., *The South African Library, Its History, Collections and Librarians* (Cape Town: A A Balkema, 1968), 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> *Guide to the National Library of South Africa*, 49.

<sup>29</sup> *Guide to the National Library of South Africa*, 49.

<sup>30</sup> Lewin Robinson, 5. For citation, see appendix: 11. See also D H Varley, “The Grey Collection” in C Pama, Ed, *The South African Library, Its History, Collections and Librarians* (Cape Town: A A Balkema, 1968), 35-40.



idiosyncratic one.<sup>31</sup> I want to go further and suggest it also as a means of identity making, and relate the making of one's "library" to the imperial, and overtly gendered idea of the gentleman's library. I want to locate Bleek's book collecting (and other activities, such as collecting shell specimens for his cousin Haeckel) within a strictly male tradition of acquiring samples from remote corners of the colonised world, as a means of expressing an identity as "civilised", as well as of situating his intellectual and academic interests.<sup>32</sup> His books included works in African, Australian, Polynesian, African and Basque philology, works in foreign languages, dictionaries, vocabularies, translations of the Bible in the native languages of India, Australia and India, folklore and Maori or Native American tales.<sup>33</sup>

## **Zulu grammar and folktales**

THE National Library retains in its Wilhelm Bleek Collection, Zulu lexicons and notebooks containing Zulu folklore which were gathered by Wilhelm Bleek during his sojourn in Natal from 1859 to 1860. The Natal papers found their way into the NLSA's collections through Wilhelm Bleek's term as custodian of the SA Public Library from 1862 to 1875. Here, the overlap between private and public documents can be discerned as the residue of Bleek's personal and public collecting and intellectual activities undertaken during his tenure as custodian of the Grey library remained with the library after his death in 1875 as part of its Grey collection. There seems to have been a great deal of "physical rearrangement and fragmentation" among these documents.<sup>34</sup> A "large portion of Bleek's material" was transferred to the City of Auckland Public Library when Grey left South Africa for New Zealand in 1859. Some of these materials were returned to Cape Town as a result of exchanges between the two libraries in 1923 and 1955. In 1944, Dr C Louis Leipoldt presented a substantial collection of Bleek material to the library. The provenance of this material is unknown.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking my Library; A talk about collecting" in *Illuminations*, Transl., Harry Zohn, (London: Pimlico, 1999), 61-69. Further context for the notion of the "gentleman's collection" can be derived from Homi K Bhaba, who argues that despite its cultural weight, the English "Book" has been able to encompass space for hybridity and resistance. See "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817" in *Critical Inquiry* 12, (Autumn 1985): 144-165.

<sup>32</sup> For more on collecting as an expression of identity of the civilised gentleman, see Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), especially Chapter 5.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew Bank, "From Pictures to Performance: Early Learning at the Hill" in *Kronos* 28 (2002): 73-76.

<sup>34</sup> MSC. 57. *Inventory of The Papers of W H I Bleek* [at the South African Library] drawn up by A Burman in September 1985. BC 151 Bleek Collection.

<sup>35</sup> MSC. 57, ii.

Reflected in the National Library's Bleek collection is the fact that Bleek was immersed in the study of African languages years before he landed on African soil. His first arrival in West Africa in 1854 was cut short due to illness, but his subsequent arrival in Natal in 1855 as interpreter for Bishop Colenso, saw him working in the field for the first – and only, time.<sup>36</sup> Here, he began the process of studying the Zulu language and collecting its folktales. All in all, Bleek spent nearly 18 months in the then Natal and Zululand, devoting most of his time to linguistic and ethnological research.<sup>37</sup> The material outcomes of this early “Zulu” period remained at the National Library and were physically separated from the manuscripts associated with what has been more popularly seen as his “core” work with the /Xam. This separation of materials between institutions may be part of the reason why there has been little attempt by scholars to situate Bleek's /Xam work in the context of his earlier fieldwork and language studies in Natal. The separation of books from manuscripts, moreover, may explain the lack of continuity in framing Bleek's “bushman researches” as an extension of the work done in Zululand, with both being the expression of Bleek's great interests in classical philology and the search for the origins of humankind.

### **Original photography**

WRITTEN material aside, the National Library contains a collection of original photographic prints which were directly linked to Wilhelm Bleek's “bushman researches”. Originally part of the George Grey collection held in Auckland, New Zealand, the images under discussion here were made according to anthropometric methods as part of a project to scientifically record and describe all the races of men within the British Empire. The project was devised in 1869 by the Darwinian biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, who was president of the Ethnological Society at the time, and facilitated through the Colonial Office in London.<sup>38</sup> In 1871, Wilhelm Bleek took on the role of supervising the photographic project at the Cape, using a selection of prisoners at the Breakwater, including /Kabbo who was later to participate in the language and folklore project, as his photographic subjects. While the photographic project itself has

<sup>36</sup> Otto H Spohr, Ed., *The Natal Diaries of Dr W.H.I. Bleek 1855-1856* (Cape Town: A A Balkema for Friends of the South African Library, 1965), 11.

<sup>37</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, Preface vii.

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 131.

been elucidated in detail elsewhere, what is interesting for the purposes of this research is the narrative of what happened to the photographic prints which resulted.<sup>39</sup> One set of prints of Breakwater prisoners – in anthropometric style comprising ten sets of four prints per set, was presented by Wilhelm Bleek to Sir George Grey as a belated 60<sup>th</sup> birthday present in 1872.<sup>40</sup> Also, Bleek gave a set of images to the naturalist Wyville Thompson and chief scientific officer Professor H N Moseley of the HMS *Challenger* when it put in at Cape Town in December 1873.<sup>41</sup> The complete series of 10 sets of four images of each prisoner entered the Pit Rivers Museum from the collection of Moseley, who was Professor of Human Anatomy at Oxford.<sup>42</sup>

The prints given by Bleek to Grey became part of the Free Public Library, Auckland's Grey Collection. However, these prints were returned to the National Library in Cape Town, possibly in 1991.<sup>43</sup> At that time, the prints, along with other "ethnological" prints in the NLSA collection which emanated from Auckland, were re-organised into separate albums by then Special Collections Librarian Karel Schoeman.<sup>44</sup> When this research into the NLSA's "ethnological" albums was carried out during the second half of 2004, the albums were stored, along with others, in a special, open shelving area in the Special Collections Reading Room. The images can thus be accessed independently of any textual information relating to the particular – and uncomfortable, circumstances of their making. The nine sets of images of Breakwater prisoners made according to Huxley's anthropometric design were kept in Album 186 in the NLSA's "ethnological" image collections. However, this particular album was "missing" during the time I completed my internship at the library in the second half of 2004. Album 186 was "found" early the following year. It had been removed from the

<sup>39</sup> For a range of descriptions of the project itself, see Andrew Bank, "Photographs and body marks: Wilhelm Bleek's Breakwater Project, Nov 1870-Dec 1871", paper delivered to the South African and Contemporary History Seminar, UWC (19 October 2004); Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 131-155; and Michael Godby, "Images of //Kabbo" in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 115-128.

<sup>40</sup> Bank, "Photographs and body marks", 1.

<sup>41</sup> Bank, "Photographs and body marks", 1; Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 143; Godby, 115.

<sup>42</sup> Godby, 115.

<sup>43</sup> See Marc Printout dated 6 Jan 1993, inside title slipcover, Album 165, NLSA Ethnological Albums.

<sup>44</sup> For an overview of a section of the library's ethnological image collections, see J. Weintraub, "Images and the archival trace: tracking colonial ethnographic photography at the NLSA", *postamble* Vol 1 No 2 (2005) (on-line at: [www.africanstudies.uct.ac.za](http://www.africanstudies.uct.ac.za)). For more on the NLSA's image collections, see Gabrielle Ritchie and Mandla Hermanus, "Challenging 'neutrality': Investigating the National Library of South Africa", paper presented to the LIASA conference (2004); also Jackie Loos, "An eye to the Future: Iconography in Post-Apartheid South Africa" in *Images of Africa*, 68 (1995): 100-113.

open shelves and kept, covered with a cloth, in a controlled place due to the sensitive nature of its contents.<sup>45</sup>

Following Edwards, Bank has read the images in Album 186 alongside texts from manuscript collections at UCT in a way that reaches beyond the anthropometric conditions of their making.<sup>46</sup> Other redeployments in public and published contexts of these and other prints from the NLSA's ethnological image collections, are less nuanced. Most often, images are reproduced as head and shoulders illustrations to accompany thumbnail biographies of one or other /Xam informant. The motivation and details related to the making of the image in 1871, are seldom referred to. Thus, Lewis-Williams uses anthropometric images of //Kabbo, /A!kunta, and /Han=kasso, as illustrations in a publication which provides a generalised ethnographic view of the /Xam past.<sup>47</sup> Szalay reproduces images of the !Kung boys /Uma and Da, but without the anthropometric context provided by the measuring stick, which has been left out.<sup>48</sup> Anjie Krog uses the same (or similar, in the case of /Han=kasso) images alongside short biographies of the /Xam interviewees, to illustrate her poetic adaptations of transcriptions from the archive.<sup>49</sup> As with her deployment of the images, Krog uses drawings made by the !Kung boys and /Han=kass'o in a similarly de-contextualised way. Both modes of illustration used in Krog's book reflect archival practice in which illustrations and photographic images tend to be separated from text and manuscript and stored separately.

As shown in the preceding examples, archival images have typically been treated differently to text and manuscript.<sup>50</sup> This is despite the postcolonial turn in which image collections in archives are being deployed to reconstitute "hidden"

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<sup>45</sup> Personal communication, Special Collections Librarian Melanie Geurstyn (January 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Bank, "Photographs and body marks".

<sup>47</sup> J D Lewis-Williams, Ed., *Stories that Float from Afar: Ancestral Folklore of the San of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000). //Kabbo's image is on p2, /A!kunta's on p15, and /Han+kass'o's on p25. Romanticised images of Dia!kwain and !Kweiten-ta-//ken, in which both are dressed for the camera, appear on p20. Note the juxtaposition of clothed and unclothed bodies, for example, on p25, where /Han=kasso faces Lucy Lloyd dressed in severe buttoned-up Victorian collar.

<sup>48</sup> Miklos Szalay, Ed., *The Moon as Shoe: Drawings of the San* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2002). 55-57.

<sup>49</sup> Antjie Krog, *the stars say "tsau": /Xam poetry of Dia!kwain, Kweiten-ta-//ken, /A!kunta, /Han=kass'o and //Kabbo* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2004). See pages 12, 20, 28, 30, 38.

<sup>50</sup> See Patricia Hayes and Andrew Bank, "Judging Books by their Covers" in *Kronos* 27 (November 2001): 1-14.

narratives and service new identities.<sup>51</sup> Reading images as social objects, and looking at the trajectories they followed as part of a collection, provides an interesting study of curatorial practice, the making and remaking of collections in general, and of image collections and the place of the image within the archive in particular.

Edwards describes the “ceaseless flow” of photography around the networks of the early British anthropologists and curators A C Haddon, Henry Balfour and Edward Burnett Tylor. The “scale and intensity of exchange activities” gave photography its distinctive place in the making of anthropological knowledge in the late nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>52</sup> That exchange system “belonged to a developing scientific discourse that linked the professionalisation of knowledge to the flow of information, the sharing of data and the maintenance of scientific ‘social’ networks of the emergent anthropological discipline through reciprocity and exchange”.<sup>53</sup> The Breakwater images in Album 186 of the NLSA’s ethnological albums, then, were examples of the way in which photography was put to use as part of strategies of surveillance and control which were being exercised modernising states and colonising powers. “Photographs closed the space between the site of observation on the colonial periphery and the site of metropolitan interpretation.”<sup>54</sup> The images in the Bleek collection were made to become part of this exchange. As well as the presentations to Grey, Thompson and Moseley described above, Bleek made 20 copies of the four anthropometric views of !Gubbu to circulate to the civil commissioners at the Cape.<sup>55</sup> None of these prints has survived.

Edwards has written cogently about the complex relationship between the image and “the way in which pasts are made in both inscription and archiving”.<sup>56</sup> Arguing for an engagement with photography in the archive in a way that releases the “dense multidimensional fluidity of the discursive practices of photography”, Edwards reminds us that neither “making nor preserving is a unified practice”.<sup>57</sup> Echoing Derrida’s argument about the unknowable weight of the archive, Edwards finds in the “rawness”

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<sup>51</sup> Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester and Wolfram Hartmann, “‘Picturing the Past’ in Namibia: The Visual Archive and its Energies” in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 103-133.

<sup>52</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 31.

<sup>54</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 31-2.

<sup>55</sup> Godby, 118.

<sup>56</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 6.

of photography and the ability of the image to present “points of fracture, an opening out” of meanings, space for the “possibility of a history that is no longer founded on traditional models of experience and reference”.<sup>58</sup> Commenting elsewhere on the dialectic between photography, history and the present, Edwards points to the way in which the photograph, “through the heightening containment of the frame, confronts the generalising narrative of history and performs an alternative set of statements of power. It returns specificity to the historical moment and forces it to signify”.<sup>59</sup>

Read alongside texts from the collection, the images contribute additional insights into Bleek’s motivations in relation to his research with the /Xam prisoners. They also provide avenues into the individual pasts of each of the photographic subjects, and room to reconstitute identities. When they are redeployed as thumbnail portraits in generalised contexts, however, the images run the risk of facilitating generalisation and stereotyping, rather than contingent interpretation.

### **Lucy Lloyd at the National Library**

LUCY LLOYD’s association with the Public Library of Cape Town began when she took over as custodian of the Grey Collection upon the death of Wilhelm Bleek in 1875. Initially a 12-month position at 125 pounds per annum (half the salary paid to her predecessor), Lloyd’s tenure lasted four years until February 1880, when the library committee appointed the philologist Dr Theophilus Hahn to replace her. Lloyd, supported by the Trustees of the Grey Collection, appealed against her dismissal. Although taken to the supreme court for judgement, there was no decision and the dispute remained unresolved.<sup>60</sup>

In 1920, Dorothea Bleek donated certain of her aunt’s papers to the then South African Library.<sup>61</sup> Dorothea Bleek also presented “36 manuscripts on the Bushman language by Bleek and Lloyd” to the library’s Grey Collection at that time. These manuscripts appeared to have been transferred to UCT’s “Manuscripts Library”, leaving

<sup>58</sup> Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 5, 6; see also Edwards, Elizabeth, “Photography and the Performance of History” in *Kronos* 27 (November 2001): 15-16.

<sup>59</sup> Edwards, “Photography”, 23.

<sup>60</sup> C J Beyers, Ed., *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol IV (Pretoria and Durban: Human Sciences Research Council, Butterworth & Co, 1981), 315.

<sup>61</sup> MSB 294 (Lucy Lloyd Collection).

only a few “original Bushman manuscripts” in the library’s possession.<sup>62</sup> The Lucy Lloyd material, including letters and Swahili books, were placed in the Lucy Lloyd Collection, to which further materials from the Grey Collection were transferred in 1985 and 1989.<sup>63</sup> Dorothea Bleek’s donation, made in the 1920s, and added to in the 1980s with material from the Bleek Collection, is now collected under Lucy Lloyd’s name. Along with the above, the collection comprises drafts of Lloyd’s “third report concerning Bushman researches”, manuscripts including texts with corrections and instructions for the printer, letters and articles about rock art (including published reports by Fritsch and Stow), and Xhosa customs, Setshuana folklore with English translations sent from Kuruman in 1878, texts in Herero and German, texts for a Xhosa Anglican prayerbook and music by John Knox Bowke, as well as rules, examination questions and other material relating to schools and missionary associations in Umtata.<sup>64</sup>

This collection of papers includes a manuscript, with text in English and Zulu, covering the battle of “Sandhlwana”, (Isandlwana) during the Anglo-Boer War. The manuscript gives an account “by a Native in Tembuland of an engagement between the British forces in Zululand and the Zulus”.<sup>65</sup> Presumably, material from this collection formed the source of Karel Schoeman’s book on Lucy Lloyd’s correspondence with G W Stow.<sup>66</sup> Schoeman was Special Collections librarian at the time of writing this book, and material relating to his publication was added to the Lloyd collection in 1997, along with general biographical material on Lloyd, and draft typescripts of articles on rock art research and interpretation by J D Lewis-Williams.

The library includes its Lucy Lloyd collection, its G W Stow collection and its Folklore Journal collection, within the larger W H I Bleek Collection.<sup>67</sup> This umbrella collection includes drawings made by !Kung children who lived with Lucy Lloyd and Jemima Bleek from 1879 to 1884, as well as notebooks containing Zulu language

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<sup>62</sup> MSC. 57. *Inventory of The Papers of W H I Bleek* [at the South African Library] drawn up by A Burman in September 1985. BC 151 Bleek Collection archivists’ working files, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT: ii.

<sup>63</sup> NLSA on-line catalogue entry for Lucy Lloyd.

<sup>64</sup> NLSA on-line catalogue entry for Lucy Lloyd.

<sup>65</sup> NLSA on-line catalogue entry for Lucy Lloyd.

<sup>66</sup> Karel Schoeman, Ed., *A Debt of Gratitude: Lucy Lloyd and the ‘Bushman work’ of G. W. Stow* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1997).

<sup>67</sup> *Guide to the National Library of South Africa*, 21.

dictionaries and folktales dating from Bleek's earlier work in Natal. In her four years of tenure as custodian of the Grey Collection, from 1875 to 1880, Lucy Lloyd catalogued the philological manuscripts in the Grey collection, edited material collected by Bleek, established the Folklore Journal and served as secretary of the related association.<sup>68</sup> She bought Stow's original copies of rock art and the manuscript of his *Native Races of South Africa* from his widow when he died in 1882.<sup>69</sup> The 355 !Kung drawings, although made after Bleek's death, are classified as part of the NLSA's Bleek collection. The library has recently completed a project in which all the !Kung drawings have been individually mounted and catalogued. This has been done for various reasons including ease of accessibility, conservation and insurance considerations.<sup>70</sup> About 100 !Kung drawings are classified in the original works category in UCT's Bleek Collection. The drawings and watercolours held at all three institutions have been digitised and are available on the Lloyd Bleek Collection digital archive.<sup>71</sup>

## **Ethnological collections at the SAM**

OBJECTS relating to the "bushmen" of the central Kalahari and the southern San, donated over a number of years and collected by the South African Museum, tell a varied and layered story of provenance, acquisition, transfer – and of museum practice favouring the separation of artefact from text.

The SA Museum began life in 1825, sharing space with the then Public Library in part of the Old Supreme Court building at the bottom of Government Avenue. As well as space, the two institutions shared collections, with objects such as coins and medals from the library's founding Dessinian Collection becoming part of the museum's early collections.<sup>72</sup> In 1859, museum and library moved together to new premises next to the Company Gardens. The handsome, neo-classical building designed by local architect Mr W H Kohler, continues to house the National Library, with the museum moving to its present location in Queen Victoria Street in 1895.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Beyers, 315.

<sup>69</sup> Beyers, 315.

<sup>70</sup> Personal communication, Special Collections Librarian, Sept 2004.

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za> [17 March 2006].

<sup>72</sup> R F H Summers, *A History of The South African Museum 1825-1975* (Cape Town: A A Balkema, 1975), 2-4.



In the midst of this, yet standing alone as marker of Lucy Lloyd's association with the "bushman researches" is her donation of a "bullroarer" or *!goin!goin* to the South African Museum in 1878.<sup>74</sup> Used as a musical instrument and to make bees swarm, the *!goin!goin* was apparently made by /Han=kass'o during his stay at Charlton House as a gift for the Bleek children.<sup>75</sup> In a letter accompanying the donation, Lloyd described the *!goin!goin* as a "whirring instrument" which was played by both sexes. In the same letter, she refers to the *//ha* as a "bow-shaped" instrument played only by males.<sup>76</sup> Objects and artefacts collected by Dorothea Bleek while on field trips in Botswana and Namibia in 1913, 1922 and 1923, are also now part of the museum's collections. These objects were purchased by Dorothea Bleek on behalf of the museum, and they were taken directly into the museum's collections. Other objects, however, some from the Bleek and Lloyd research of 1875-84, and others from Dorothea's field trips in the early 1900s, are now also part of the SA Museum's collections. This material, originally donated to UCT, is provenanced as follows:

- i) In 1935, Dorothea Bleek donated ethnological material to UCT, some of which she had collected on field trips – probably in the 1920s, and a small number of items from the Bleek-Lloyd estates.
- ii) In 1945, UCT acquired the bulk of ethnological material from the Bleek and Lloyd estates – comprising mainly objects from the central Kalahari and southern San.

This material was transferred, at different times over several decades, from its original location at UCT, to the museum, as a result of a "personal arrangement" (related to curatorial imperatives) between Margaret Shaw, then at UCT, and Monica Wilson, then at the SA Museum.<sup>77</sup> Dorothea Bleek's notebooks – there are 32 notebooks, kept between 1910 and 1930, remain in UCT's Bleek Collection.<sup>78</sup> The object collection was transferred to the South African Museum, mainly in two batches

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<sup>73</sup> Summers, 61-66.

<sup>74</sup> SAM 5347. Thanks to Gerald Klinghardt for alerting me to this.

<sup>75</sup> Lewis-Williams, 26. For /Xam text and translation related to the use of the *!goin!goin*, and an illustration, see W H I Bleek and L C Lloyd, Ed., *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* (London: George Allen & Company, 1911), 352-359.

<sup>76</sup> Lloyd's letter is dated "1 May '78".

<sup>77</sup> Personal communication – Gerald Klinghardt, 29 Oct 2004.

<sup>78</sup> BC 151, A3.1-A3.32.

in June 1961 and March 1981. However, “bits and pieces” were transferred before, during, and after the two main transfers of material, although no material was transferred after about 1981. The status of the transferred material at SAM is that of “indefinite loan”.<sup>79</sup> Certain of the objects have been displayed at different times, including in the “bushman” diorama, in ethnographic displays on bead/music making still on show at the museum, in the *Miscast* installation of 1996, and in an exhibition on women anthropologists held in 2002.<sup>80</sup>

Writing as Assistant Director of the SAM in the introduction to the *Miscast* publication, Davison sketches the following provenance for certain objects:

A number of objects shown in this exhibition [i.e. *Miscast*] were originally housed in the ethnological collection of the School of African Life and Language at the University of Cape Town. However, interest in material culture waned as evolutionism and diffusionism lost academic credibility in favour of functionalist social anthropology. The collections eventually fell into neglect and disrepair. By the 1960s, anthropologists at UCT were conscious that an emphasis on culture and ethnic identity was open to political abuse, and consequently there was little theoretical or practical interest in material culture. Most of the collection that remained was placed in the care of the South African Museum on permanent loan. A recent revival of interest in cultural studies has not only revealed the significance of the collections ... but has underlined the immensely valuable curatorial role played by the South African Museum.<sup>81</sup>

The foregoing discussion has argued that the material outcomes of the Bleek-Lloyd research project were, first, structured by their genesis within a period of colonial expansionism, and within the gendered environment of the library and the gentleman’s collection. Second, it has argued that material has been fragmented as a result of curatorial practice, not only between institutions, but within institutions as well. My investigation into further aspects of the fragmentation of materials, as well as the

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<sup>79</sup> Personal communication – Gerald Klinghardt, 29 Oct 2004.

<sup>80</sup> Personal communication – Gerald Klinghardt, 29 Oct 2004.

<sup>81</sup> Patricia Davison, “Held in Trust” in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 10-11.

consolidation of certain materials into a formalised, catalogued collection, moves to UCT library's Manuscripts and Archives division, which is the topic of the next chapter.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter 3:

### Setting in Stone; The dutiful daughter, her aunt and the German librarian

*"The most important part of this collection is section A, the notebooks and lexicon, which reflects the work done by Dr Bleek, his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd, and later that of his daughter Dorothea, in recording the language and folklore of the Bushman. These also show how closely he and Lucy Lloyd collaborated in this work."*<sup>1</sup>

*"[I]t may now be fruitful to consider the archive as but one of a range of institutions including libraries, museums, local records and special collections all designed to create a particular vision of society."*<sup>2</sup>

IN relation to the Bleek-Lloyd materials, a picture emerges of a collection comprising documents, photographic images, objects, original artwork, manuscripts and published and unpublished material, which, although fragmented and shared among three institutions, is bound together in the person of Dorothea Bleek. It is Dorothea, fifth daughter born to Wilhelm and Jemima Bleek, who may be seen as the central figure or agent in the formal creation of the Bleek collection.<sup>3</sup>

Dorothea Bleek was two years old when her father died. Nevertheless, she, and her siblings both older and younger, would have shared their formative childhood years with the succession of research subjects, whom their mother and aunt continued to host until the family was forced, for financial reasons, to return to Europe in the early 1880s. Of all Wilhelm Bleek's daughters, Dorothea was the one whose childhood exposure to "bushman researches" became a lifelong interest and passion. Although schooled in Europe, she studied African languages at university and returned to South Africa in about 1904, initially teaching school at Cradock in the Eastern Cape.<sup>4</sup> While at Cradock,

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<sup>1</sup> Etaine Eberhard and Leonie Twentyman Jones, *The Bleek Collection, A List* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1992), iii.

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, "Introduction" in Carolyn Hamilton, *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 15.

<sup>3</sup> I grateful to Andrew Bank for suggesting this line of argument.

<sup>4</sup> W J de Kock, *Dictionary of South African Bibliography*, Vol I (Johannesburg: National Council for Social Research, 1968), 80.

she collaborated with Helen Tongue in researching cave paintings originally traced by her father's acquaintance George Stow some 50 years earlier. Later, she undertook ethnological field trips for the South African Museum in 1910/11, when she travelled to the Northern Cape to make contact with descendants of the prisoners interviewed by her father. She became reader in Bushman languages at UCT in the 1920s, a post she retained until 1948.<sup>5</sup> Her long association with UCT formed the connection which led her to make donations of both her father's and aunt's papers to the university, donations which took place in the late 1930s and in 1947, the year before she died in 1948.

UCT's Manuscripts and Archives division retains the largest part of the Bleek-Lloyd material, including notebooks penned by Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek, their personal and professional correspondence, newspaper clippings, original artwork, as well as certain photographic images. Along with the original materials, the UCT collection is fleshed out with a substantial collection of correspondence and photographic material which has been copied from other collections, including the Killie Campell Africana Library in Durban, and archives in Germany and New Zealand. There is also a photocopied version of a substantial album of Bleek family photographs, most likely contributed by Dr K F M Scott, in UCT's collection.

Dorothea Bleek, then, was central to the establishment of UCT's initial collection. Her donations to UCT were made "over a number of years from 1936 to 1947" while she was Honorary Reader in Bushman Languages.<sup>6</sup> The "greatest part" of these donations comprised Wilhelm Bleek's library of books and pamphlets on African languages, which in terms of accepted curatorial practice at the time, was catalogued separately and "put into the appropriate section of the Library's stock".<sup>7</sup> This early

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<sup>5</sup> De Kock, *Dictionary*, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Etaine Eberhardt, "Wilhelm Bleek and the Founding of Bushman Research" in Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson, Eds., *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1996), 49. Compare with dates given by Spohr in his bio-bibliographical sketch of Wilhelm Bleek, who writes that Dorothea Bleek's donations of a "great deal of published and unpublished material" given to UCT Library in the late 1930s and in 1947, formed the basis of UCT Library's Bleek Collection which was started in 1942 (Introduction).

<sup>7</sup> Eberhardt, "Wilhelm Bleek": 49.

fragmentation of material is now being reversed as UCT's Rare Books librarian is working on a reconstruction of Wilhelm Bleek's library.<sup>8</sup>

## Lost and found

WHAT remained in the Manuscripts and Archives division then, was the non-book residue of the collection. The "BC 151 Bleek Collection Information re Provenance" file, kept in the archivists' working filing cabinet, contains several accession lists and slips of paper which are undated and refer to donations made by Dorothea F Bleek and Dr K F M Scott. One of these is an undated, photocopied list headed "CONTENTS OF TIN TRUNK NO 4" (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup> This was perhaps the only guide to the collection available in the 1960s. Among the items listed is "BCA 166-173 Bleek WHI letters to parents, other relatives. Jemima Lloyd letters to Bleek and his letters to her. (1848-1862)". A hand-written note next to this entry reads "ex Dr. Scott". Other entries read "BCA 203 Bleek D.F. n(?) Tracings of Bushman paintings"; "BCA 202 Stow G.W. his original drawings for Native races of S.A.; and "BCA 206 Bleek correspondence ex Grey collection Auckland, now SAPL". The "tin trunk" list is now an A4 page on its own, but clearly was once taped as part of the larger, hand-written document headed T.T.4 (Figure 2).

Another undated, loose-leafed, un-numbered typescript on light blue paper, tabulates horizontally accession details of material under headings "Accession No", "Author & Biographical data", "Title & Collection", "Format & Type", "Date & place of origin", "Source", and "Remarks". Entries from BCA1 to BCA 119 are listed. The pages are held together with a green paper clip. Another three-page, A4 typed list is headed in pencil with "D 1366, Bleek Collection, BC 151". The first entry reads "296 photographs"; other items listed include "16 maps", "2 drawings", "42 newspapers", "Book of press cuttings", and "11 Copies of 50 Plates (with description) of bushman rock paintings". There is also a four-page list attached to blue request forms dated 13 June 1973, which apparently refers to a project in which the notebook pages were microfilmed. Based on these documents, then, early record-keeping in relation to the Bleek-Lloyd materials, has been sketchy at best. The haphazard treatment of materials

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<sup>8</sup> Personal communication – Tanya Barben, June 2005. Thanks to Andrew Bank for pointing this out to me.

<sup>9</sup> BC 151. Bleek Collection Provenance file, archivists' working files, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT.

during the 1960s and 1970s suggests, moreover, that these were not valued as much as they are today.

It is suggested that Bleek material was initially shelved in a room known as the Bleek or African Languages Seminar that was located, along with seminar rooms for other disciplines, on the upper level of the old Jagger Library (Figures 3 and 4).<sup>10</sup> These rooms are now offices positioned on the balcony above the existing African Studies reading room. It is likely that an imposing portrait of Dr Bleek, donated to UCT by Dorothea Bleek, had pride of place in the seminar room.<sup>11</sup> A small portrait in oil of a young, unknown “Bushman” boy, presented to UCT by Dr K F M Scott in 1953, is said also to have hung in the Bleek Seminar.<sup>12</sup> It is suggested that the Manuscripts and Archives division of the library was, during the 1950s, contained in “a travelling trunk”.<sup>13</sup> Later, material was stored in the Immelman Building in boxes laid on their sides.<sup>14</sup> According to Etaine Eberhardt, who joined the library in 1952, Gerald Quinn, the librarian initially in charge of special collections, believed material should be kept in tin trunks rather than moving stacks. The Bleek collection was one of the “most heavily used” at the time, but it was “in a mess for years” with only Quinn and Eberhard herself being able to access material.<sup>15</sup> The ordered systems of access researchers use today was triggered more than likely by the 1991 conference *Bleek and Lloyd: 1870-1991*.<sup>16</sup>

But back in the 1950s and 1960s, it was not certain whether the famous notebooks could even be located. What seems certain is that Dorothea Bleek held on to the notebooks for as long as she could. Recalling, in 1953, his interview with Dorothea Bleek in the 1940s, Eric Rosenthal twice mentions the row upon row of notebooks on

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<sup>10</sup> Personal communication, Etaine Eberhardt, April 19 and May 6, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Otto H Spohr, *Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek – A bio-bibliographical sketch* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1962), frontispiece; see also Skotnes, *Miscast*, 95. The photograph was taken in 1862 in Cape Town. It was presented by Bleek to Jemima Lloyd, who was in Europe at the time, as a token of his love, and is discussed in the courtship correspondence between the two (see BC 151: C4, C8). Thanks to Andrew Bank for alerting me to this.

<sup>12</sup> Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, 34.

<sup>13</sup> Personal communication, Etaine Eberhardt, April 19 and May 6, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication, Etaine Eberhardt, April 19 and May 6, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication, Etaine Eberhardt, April 19 and May 6, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> The conference, organised by Janette Deacon, John Parkington, Thomas Dowson and David Lewis-Williams, was held in Cape Town from September 9-11. See Deacon and Dowson, 4, for reference to the catalogue of materials compiled by Eberhard and Twentyman-Jones.

her shelves, representing the philological work of her aunt and father, and clearly a collection of great value – both emotional and intellectual, to Dorothea.<sup>17</sup>

The “rediscovery” of the notebooks on the shelves at the then Jagger Library seems to have occurred in the early 1970s, at the instigation of Roger Hewitt who was in London researching the narratives of the southern San for his PhD at the time. Writing in 2002, Hewitt told how “all one hundred and eighteen” of the notebooks were unearthed after he employed librarians to undertake an exhaustive search of the shelves.<sup>18</sup> This “rediscovery” has been claimed by Hewitt as a foundational moment for the archive, the moment from which all else has flowed.<sup>19</sup>

Hewitt described a “small inexplicit reference to some unidentified notebooks” in a book by a “one-time librarian at the Jagger Library” as the key that alerted him to the presence of the notebooks.<sup>20</sup> That “one-time” librarian was Otto Hartung Spohr, the German-born academic turned librarian whose research on Wilhelm Bleek during the 1960s added much of the now taken-for-granted personal and anecdotal context to what was initially a dry collection of philological books, papers, reports and manuscripts.

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<sup>17</sup> See Eric Rosenthal and A J H Goodwin, *Cave artists of South Africa* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1953), 5-6; 14. Thanks to Andrew Bank for alerting me to this reference.

<sup>18</sup> Roger L Hewitt, “An Ethnographic Sketch of the /Xam” in Miklos Szalay, Ed., *The Moon as Shoe: Drawings of the San* (Scheidegger & Spiess, Zurich, 2002), 33-34.

<sup>19</sup> Hewitt, 33-34.

<sup>20</sup> For the “inexplicit reference”, see Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, 61 (note 106).



- \* A.I. Bushman Dictionary, 1953 bound
- \* 47-112-113: German-English
- \* 192-17: Bushman genealogical tables; original Bushman drawings for "Specimens of folklore"
- \* 193: Black & Whites; reviews of his works,
- \* 194: Caroline Thomas MBS A negro's history of Bishop Hokenzie's Mission in Central Africa 1872/3
- \* 195: Maria B. letters to Black
- \* 196: W.H.I. notes from various language Bsh.
- \* 197: "Glossary of Bushman" 1897
- \* 198-200: Photo Album - Friends of the Blacks; scenes from Europe
- \* 199: European personalities; S.A. native pictures
- \* 201-202: Black W.H.I. letters to parents, other relatives
- \* 203: Maria Lloyd letters to Black and his letters to her. (1890-1892) *ex. 10-10-11*
- \* 204: Black family pictures, mainly photos - genealogical data
- \* 205: Black D.P. Dictionary of Bushman Lang. typescript and
- \* 206: "and Star: photos of Star & Bushman paintings
- \* 207: "W.H.I. Opening der Sprache; print, but with Man notes
- \* 208: Early Bushman sketches, newspaperclippings for a book to be
- \* 209: Black W.H.I. letters from "not Volubled"
- \* 210-211: genealogical material on Black family
- \* 212: Black W.H.I. extra copy On the origin of language
- \* 213: "copies of Comparative grammar with some Man notes
- \* 214: " & Lloyd Bushman reports 1-1 with the corrections
- \* 215: " proofs of pictures for "Specimens of Bushman..."
- \* 216: 4 Australia photos from Dr. Elmslie
- \* 217: Elmslie's letters to Black W.H.I. his original drawings for Native
- \* 218: Black D.P. (?) Specimens of Bushman paintings
- \* 219: " W.H.I. Natal Diaries, July-August 1896 in German Spm.
- \* 220: Colenso's Bushman letters to Black ex Z. Campbell, Durban
- \* 221: Black correspondence ex Grey collection Auckland, New S.A.

Nothing is to be added to this trunk, the rest of space reserved for  
 BCA 166-73, 205 and 206 temporarily with Spohr files for fuller  
 cataloguing etc.  
 There are still some uncatalogued files on shelf in Spohr's office  
 which will be added to above.

\* *Nothing is to be added to this trunk, the rest of space reserved for*

Figure 1: Undated, typed list headed "CONTENTS OF TIN TRUNK NO 4" lists BCA 1 to BCA 206, accession numbers which are described in greater detail on hand-written, tabulated pages attached with a paper clip. The A4 pages were initially taped together vertically, but the tape has come undone and the pages bear the yellow marks of sellotape which no longer serves any purpose. A typed note at the bottom of the page reads: "Nothing is to be added to this trunk, the rest of space reserved for BCA 166-73, 205 and 206 temporarily [sic] with Spohr file for fuller cataloguing etc. there are still some uncatalogued files on shelf in Spohr's office which will be added to above."

# Handwritten title: All these Bleek items [ ] T T 4

151 (1-33) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5

- 152 4 from 200 (Bleek, H. M. 34) set notes by U.S. 1850
- 153 (1-33) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- 154 48 (24 proofs) of Bushman Geography for Specimens of Bushman 1850-5
- (from 1-33) (1-33) (1-33) (1-33)
- 155 Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (1) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (2) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (3-4) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (5) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (6) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (7) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (8) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (9) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (10) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (11) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (12) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (13) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (14) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (15) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (16) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (17) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (18) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (19) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (20) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (21) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (22) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (23) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (24) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (25) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (26) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (27) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (28) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (29) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (30) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (31) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (32) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5
- (33) Bleek, H. M. 34 Bushman Geography fragments 1850-5

Figure 2: This handwritten, photocopied document is headed "All these Bleek items in T T 4. A sub-heading reads BCA 151 (1-1a,-33). The page appears to be one half of the cover of an early inventory of the collection. The document comprises two sheets of A4 paper, which have been taped together and folded vertically. Text runs horizontally across the once taped-together pages. The text is closely written, with pen or pencil marks made at a later time.

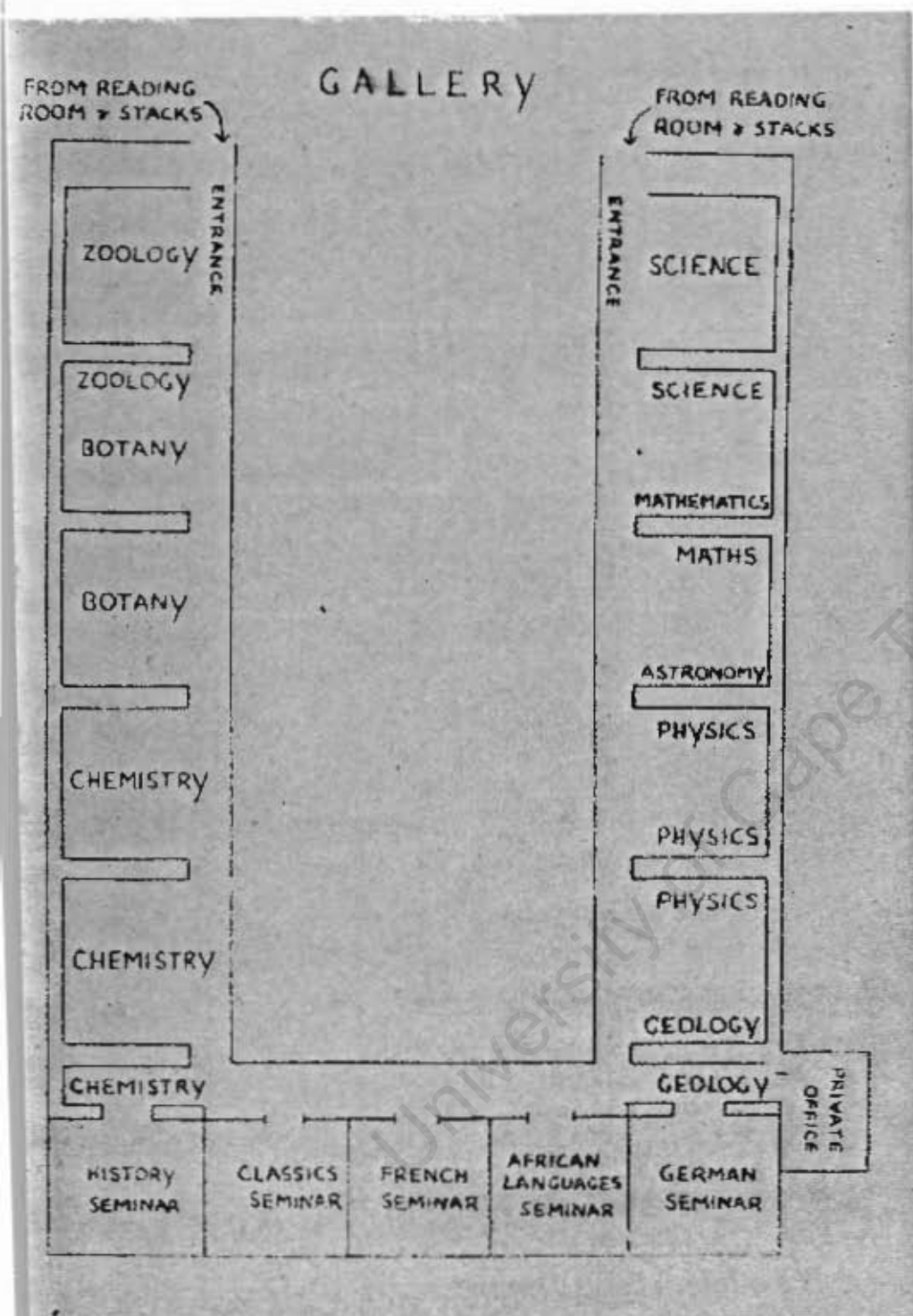


Figure 3: This line drawing shows the layout of stacks and seminar rooms positioned on the gallery above the existing African Studies reading room at UCT. Note the room labelled African Languages Seminar in the horizontal plane, second from right. (Buzv J.W. Jagger Library)



**Figure 4.** An undated photograph showing the African Studies reading room looking from the entrance to the existing library. Note the three office doors on the gallery above. Based on the accompanying drawing, the African Languages Seminar door would have been on the far right, almost beyond the frame of the picture. (Buzv J.W. Jagger Library)

### **Otto Spohr and German exploration**

SPOHR's work on Bleek appears to have been motivated by political considerations. It was occasioned in 1962, when, at the invitation of Germany, South Africa participated in two "Art Weeks" aimed at fostering "closer cultural ties" between the two countries.<sup>21</sup> The University of Cape Town "felt it appropriate on this occasion to commemorate Dr W H I Bleek" whose "pioneering researches into the African and Bushman languages and folklore earned him an international reputation as the 'Father of Bantu philology'."<sup>22</sup> Spohr, who by then had worked at UCT Library for 17 years and was a specialist in reproduction techniques for libraries, undertook the task of compiling

<sup>21</sup> Otto H Spohr, No date, *Librarians at Work – And at Leisure: Searching for Data on Dr W H I Bleek*, Typescript (initialled O H S), presumably a copy of Spohr's contribution to the staff newsletter *Jaggerite*, pink archivists working file, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT.

<sup>22</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

the bibliography. Apart from the “brief student biography by Miss A E Perry”, he found little biographical information on Bleek, and scant information on his publications.<sup>23</sup>

In 1960, when student librarian Elizabeth Perry began her bibliography of the Bleek family, she struggled to find material and commented that the bibliography was “surprisingly short”. Perry compiled a bibliography of the Bleek family as whole, including the work of Wilhelm’s father Friedrich, and his daughter Dorothea. Writing about research conducted the previous year, Perry noted that much of the work was “still in manuscript form and remains to be published”.<sup>24</sup> Perry confirmed Eberhard’s comments about the confused state of the collection at that time, and noted that the majority of the unpublished material was “not catalogued or organised in any way and could thus not be included in the bibliography”.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, Perry made no explicit mention of the notebooks themselves, and her only references to the texts and folklore are by way of the edited versions published in *Bantu Studies*, and *Specimens of Bushman folklore*. In all there are 53 entries for Wilhelm, six for Lucy, 32 for Dorothea.<sup>26</sup>

With research interests in German Africana, Spohr may have felt a great affinity towards Wilhelm Bleek when he began his research. Both were librarians, and the two men shared a political liberalism – Spohr studied economics and was attached to Heidelberg University’s Institute for Social and Political Studies in the 1930s, but resigned because of political pressure put on anti-nazi academics (compare with Bleek’s identification with Colenso).<sup>27</sup> Spohr immigrated to South Africa in 1936 and worked at the Cape Times as reporter/photographer (Bleek wrote for *Het Volksblad*), served in the Union Defence Force during WW2, and in 1945 joined the University of Cape Town

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<sup>23</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*. On this point, compare Eberhard, “Wilhelm Bleek”, 51, who asserts that his “publications can be easily traced, and a list was published in the *South African Mail* in 1875”.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Ann Perry, 1960. *The Bleek family: a bibliography* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, School of Librarianship), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Perry, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Perry, Introduction. Perry describes Bleek’s research interactions with the /Xam as follows: “He was helped in his studies of the Bushman language by the fact that Bushmen were employed in the building of the harbour at Cape Town. He acquired an intimate knowledge of their language by frequent conversation with these people.” She also points out that “special keys were made for the Bleeks in the printing of articles on the Bushman languages. The standard typewriter is unable to print words like !kun, /Xam – ka – k’e, /ameib, /auni.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Michael Meyer, *Otto Hartung Spohr: a bibliography of his writings* (University of Cape Town Libraries, Cape Town, 1997).

Libraries. He re-qualified as a librarian and pioneered the use of photographic reproduction techniques in libraries throughout southern Africa.<sup>28</sup>

In UCT's reports on research and publications for 1953-55, Spohr is listed as being busy with "research in progress" on German librarians at the Cape. In the report for the period 1959-61, he is listed in the Africana section for an article on German Africana, and in the biography section, for being in the process of compiling a bibliography of materials in Cape Town libraries relating to Dr W H I Bleek.<sup>29</sup>

Spohr's success in accessing the detail of Bleek's life was greatly enhanced by his German birth, and his interests in photographic reproduction techniques in libraries, and in German Africana.<sup>30</sup> Spohr traced and translated Bleek's correspondence and journal papers in other archives both locally and abroad, and copied them for UCT's collection. A series of letters in German, dated 1963, 64 and 65, addressed to Dr Otto Spohr of the University of Cape Town library, from Aenne Bleek, with addresses in Argentina, remain as proof of Spohr's wide-ranging efforts to build as complete a picture as possible of Wilhelm Bleek's life.<sup>31</sup> Spohr unearthed Bleek's contributions to *Het Volksblad* which apparently were discovered only after Bleek's death.<sup>32</sup> The leaders were, in turn, discovered by Spohr in a packet of newspaper cuttings among the Bleek papers at the then Jagger Library after he had completed the research for his first publication on Bleek, the bio-bibliographical sketch.<sup>33</sup> UCT archivist Eberhard noted in the 1990s (some thirty years later), that the Bleek Collection contained 70 leader articles, written in English, which had been "clipped and pasted onto folio sheets", and

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<sup>28</sup> He wrote articles on this topic in 1961 and 1962. With a flourish, he records "12 years of progress, 1946 to 1961" and praises "[e]nthusiastic librarians with progressive ideas", as well as the "pioneering spirit of the new African universities [which] has done a great deal to promote document-reproduction techniques". "Document reproduction services in libraries in Africa South of the Sahara" (Spohr, 1962, 131). See BC 687. O H Spohr papers. Box 3, journal articles in light green file, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT. I include this information to create a sense of the enthusiasm with which Spohr embraced his task, and to give a sense of how he uses the term "pioneering".

<sup>29</sup> BC 687. O H Spohr papers. Box 3, cuttings in light green file. Manuscripts and Archives, UCT.

<sup>30</sup> In the 1960s, Spohr published a book on the little-known second governor of the Cape, the German Zacharias Wagner, and also translated the diary of the explorer Lichtenstein.

<sup>31</sup> BC 151, Bleek, Aenne, Clason Argentine – correspondence with O H Spohr re: Bleek family, archivists' working files, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT. No translations appear to be available.

<sup>32</sup> Otto H Spohr, "The First Special Librarian in South Africa: W.H.I. Bleek at the S.A. Library" in C Pama, Ed., *The South African Library: Its history, collections and librarians 1818-1968* (Cape Town: A A Balkema, 1968), 62 (note 13): "It became known only at Bleek's death that he had been a leader writer for *Het Volksblad* for a number of years. Records of 88 leaders from Bleek's pen have been traced; but there might have been more."

<sup>33</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

were proof of Bleek's outspoken opinions on public affairs.<sup>34</sup> Spohr published a paper on Bleek's *Het Volksblad* leaders in the *Quarterly Bulletin of the SA Library* in 1963 (17(4): 116-126).<sup>35</sup>

Continued searching yielded articles which Bleek had written for a German geographical magazine, and, in UCT's Bleek Collection, Spohr discovered pencilled extracts from Bleek's letters which Jemima Lloyd had made in 1862. The extracts dealt with Bleek's pending appointment as Grey librarian and the publication of his *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages*. Spohr also found the manuscript pages of part of a diary which Bleek had kept in 1855.<sup>36</sup> Having exhausted his "homeground", Spohr expanded his search to take in material kept at the SA Public Library (now the National Library of South Africa). Here his search was "really rewarded" by access to "a great many letters which the Auckland Public Library in New Zealand had sent on exchange from their Grey Collection to the SA Public Library in 1956".<sup>37</sup> Altogether 25 letters written by Dr Bleek between 1857 and the year of his death were found among "some 210 lots of 'African letters', most of them written to Sir George Grey by his friends and acquaintances in Africa".<sup>38</sup>

Spohr's first work on Bleek – the bio-biographical sketch – was published in 1962. It was offered as a work-in-progress and in it, Spohr appealed for more information about Bleek, and referred to additional material in UCT's collection which would form the basis of later publications. Spohr noted that the biography was based on printed and unpublished notes by and about Dr Bleek "which have so far come to my knowledge and are accessible in the South African Public Library and the Library of the University of Cape Town".<sup>39</sup> UCT's "vast treasurers of manuscripts, pictorial material, notes and letters" would require careful cataloguing, while other material would require the specialist attention of scholars in "Bantu philology and Bushman languages".<sup>40</sup> Spohr documented his frustration over the separation between the personal and the professional – the lack of personal detail in favour of emphasis on Bleek's scholarly

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<sup>34</sup> Eberhard, *Wilhelm Bleek*: 53.

<sup>35</sup> Otto H Spohr, "Bleek's *Het Volksblad* leaders", *Quarterly Bulletin of the SA Library* 17 (4) (1963): 116-126.

<sup>36</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

<sup>37</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

<sup>38</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

<sup>39</sup> Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, Introduction.



achievements. Although Bleek was featured in the German encyclopedia and in “practically all the leading encyclopaedias” of the time, Spohr was unable to add much personal detail to his bio-bibliographical sketch.<sup>41</sup> At that point, Spohr was unable to “trace any further diaries or published letters after May 1858, the date of the last letter to Bleek’s parents ... till the time of his death in 1875”. Instead, he had to be satisfied with “an occasional glimpse” into Bleek’s private life, since by far the greater part of the correspondence available at the time dealt with Bleek’s linguistic researches and his duties as curator of the Grey collection.<sup>42</sup>

### Privileged access

IN just three years, however, this situation had changed substantially – although there was still no mention of the notebooks. By the time *Natal Diaries* was published in 1965, Dr K F M Scott (Bleek’s granddaughter) had responded to Spohr’s published appeal in the sketch, with “a promise of photographs and possibly some letters” concerning Bleek, and Dr Killie Campbell had notified Spohr regarding “150 letters written by Bishop Colenso to Dr Bleek” which were in her Africana library.<sup>43</sup> In the preface to the 1965 work, Spohr acknowledged Dr Killie Campbell for giving him access to Colenso’s letters to Bleek, and for allowing him to copy these for the Bleek collection at UCT.<sup>44</sup> In addition, he acknowledged the receipt of two Bleek research grants from UCT, as well as an “extremely generous research grant” from Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst in 1963 which enabled him to travel to Jena and other parts of Germany to trace sources on Bleek.<sup>45</sup> In a typescript dated 1980, presumably the draft of his introduction to the re-issue his bio-biography on Bleek, Spohr acknowledged the “former West German consul Mr O E Heipertz” for twice arranging “generous grants” to allow Spohr to travel to Germany to “meet various members of the Bleek family in various parts of Germany and to obtain a great deal of documents relating to W H I

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<sup>40</sup> Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, Introduction.

<sup>41</sup> Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, Introduction.

<sup>42</sup> Spohr, *W H I Bleek*, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Spohr, *Librarians at Work*.

<sup>44</sup> Otto H Spohr, *The Natal Diaries of Dr W H I Bleek 1855-1856* (Cape Town: A A Balkema for Friends of the South African Library, 1965). Copies of letters from Colenso to Bleek, 1854-1872, are at BC 151, C13.1-C13.161.

<sup>45</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, viii-ix. Copies of Bleek’s letters to Haeckel, as well as letters to Haeckel from other members of the Bleek family covering the period 1867-1918, are at BC 151, C12.1-C12.88.



Bleek.”<sup>46</sup> These visits to Germany were in 1959 and 1963.<sup>47</sup> Spohr met Wilhelm Bleek, son of the Rev F Bleek, in Mehlem near Bonn. The young Wilhelm assisted Spohr in the search for data about Bleek and found material on Bleek in East Germany, as well as other German-Africana.

Spohr’s knowledge of German, his interest in German Africana, and his serendipitous position of employment at UCT’s library, gave him privileged access to Bleek material and gave him a certain amount of control over the shape and pace at which material on Bleek became available during the 1960s. In his bio-bibliographical sketch, Spohr refers to “some 20 pages in Petermann’s *Geographischen Mittheilungen* of Bleek’s *Researches in Natal*, partly from letters to his parents or to Prof A Petermann, partly extracts from his diary for the period 31<sup>st</sup> May 1855 to 18<sup>th</sup> May 1856”, which would “make an interesting Natal item at a later stage”. As these needed translation, Spohr decided these were “beyond the scope of our biographical notes to translate here the full text”.<sup>48</sup> This material, together with manuscript pages of Bleek’s Natal diary unearthed during several searches through UCT’s collection, were later published as the *Natal Diaries*.

Armed now with additional personal information on Bleek, Spohr in *Natal Diaries*, framed him in the tradition of the great African explorer: “Bleek’s great aim was to become an explorer in Africa like Dr Livingstone or Dr H Barth. However, fate decided that the only fieldwork he was ever to undertake was to be during the period he spent in Natal.”<sup>49</sup> In a subsequent journal paper, Spohr again frames Bleek as being thwarted in his aim of becoming “another of the great African explorers”.<sup>50</sup> Spohr’s liberal academic leanings are reflected in the motivation he offers for his translation of Bleek’s Natal diaries. In his preface to *Natal Diaries*, he expresses the hope that the work would provide “English-speaking historians, linguists and anthropologists with little known source material on Natal and Zululand made in the middle of the last century”. Spohr’s view was that Bleek, as “the first trained philologist to come to South

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<sup>46</sup> BC 687, Box 6. “Introduction, acknowledgements and arrangement of material”, typescript, file labelled “More WHI Bleek My copy”.

<sup>47</sup> BC 687, Box 6. “Introduction, acknowledgements and arrangement of material”, typescript, file labelled “More WHI Bleek My copy”.

<sup>48</sup> Spohr. *W H I Bleek*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Spohr. *Natal Diaries*, Preface.

<sup>50</sup> Spohr, “The First Special Librarian”, 57.

Africa”, would provide a unique set of observations about early Natal.<sup>51</sup> He saw Bleek’s Natal narratives as objective and free of political influence: “Still more important was the fact that Bleek had no missionary calling; he lacked any sort of commercial ability and he certainly had no political axe to grind, although he was always prepared to stand for human rights, irrespective of race or creed, in public and in the press.”<sup>52</sup> In this description, one gets a sense of the kinds of things Spohr would like to have said about himself.

Bleek’s interest in West African languages had developed enough to be able to secure him his first “African appointment” in 1854.<sup>53</sup> Spohr cites a German newspaper report published in Berlin in May 1854 (cutting in Bleek papers), which comments on Bleek’s plans to explore the Niger, perhaps to meet up with the explorer Barth, and generally to “try to make his way into the interior of the continent to Bornu and link up with Vogel ... Our new traveller becomes now a member of a long line of German scientists in Central Africa, who from Hornemann down to Barth and Vogel have worked indefatigably on the discovery of the interior of a continent”.<sup>54</sup>

But, as is well known, illness put paid to Bleek’s plans to be an explorer, and after this brief sojourn in West Africa, he returned to London in 1854, where his “fatherly friend the Prussian ambassador C.K.J. Bunsen helped the disappointed young explorer to establish new contacts”.<sup>55</sup> Spohr argued that the traces of this early desire to be an explorer in the grand tradition were left in Bleek’s archive in the form of several book titles.<sup>56</sup> In UCT’s library was *A Grammar of the Isubu Tounge* which, the inscription tells, was acquired in Fernando Po in 1854. Also in the collection was a manuscript dealing with the same topic. Furthermore, the book collection contained work on the Ga language translated from the Danish by Bleek himself at the time of these early travels.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, viii.

<sup>52</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, viii.

<sup>53</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Spohr, *Natal Diaries*, 6.

Spohr's knowledge of German and access to European archives allowed him to include many interesting and varied bits of personal information about Bleek in *Natal Diaries*. Spohr published a volume in German on Bleek's letters to his mother and brother between 1858 and 1860, titled *Briefe aus Pau: W H I Bleek an die Mutter und den Bruder in Buenos Aires*. An edited English version of this publication, entitled "Dr Bleek at Pau", was published in the *Quarterly Bulletin of the SA Library* in 1965 (20 (1): 5-10). The letters revealed that Grey was interested in exchanging "the greater part of his Africa Collection" with the British Museum, although this never came about.<sup>58</sup> Despite the depth of detail uncovered by Spohr on Bleek's early work on African languages, and his experiences in Natal, scholarship on Bleek-Lloyd has tended to sideline this period in Wilhelm Bleek's life in favour of an almost exclusive focus on his "bushman researches".

### Selective vision

SPOHR apparently exercised a similarly selective vision in respect of Bleek's research partner Lucy Loyd, who scarcely seems to pique his interest at any time in the 1960s. The first mention of Lucy Lloyd crops up in 1979 in correspondence between Spohr and Etaine Eberhard (addressed as assistant in charge, Archives and Manuscripts, UCT Jagger Library).<sup>59</sup> Spohr, presumably retired (he died in 1980), wrote: "I alarmed all the libraries I could think of, and none of them had anything on Lucy Lloyd with the notable exception of you."<sup>60</sup> Lucy Lloyd is again referred to in passing in a typescript dated 1980. In the typescript, which appears to be the draft introduction to a proposed (and expanded) re-issue of his bio-biographical sketch, Spohr touched on his search for documents on Lucy Lloyd: "I contacted all the major libraries in Cape Town about information as regards Miss L C Lloyd and they were unable to find anything. Eventually Miss E Eberhard of UCT Libraries unearthed the information about Dr L C Lloyd."<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Spohr, "The First Special Librarian", 62-63 (note 17). Bleek's letters to his mother from Paris and Pau c1858 to 1860 are at BC 151, C1.32-C1.45, marked VERY FRAGILE.

<sup>59</sup> Spohr to Etaine Eberhard. 8 October 1979. BC 687. O H Spohr papers. Box 4. File marked GL 82.

<sup>60</sup> Spohr to Etaine Eberhard. 8 October 1979. BC 687. O H Spohr papers. Box 4. File marked GL 82.

<sup>61</sup> BC 687, Box 6. "Introduction, acknowledgements and arrangement of material", typescript in file labelled "More WHI Bleek My copy".

But it is likely Spohr's death in 1980 put paid to the expanded re-issue of his bio-bibliography on Bleek.<sup>62</sup> Instead, UCT librarian Etaine Eberhard appeared to take the baton from Spohr and assumed responsibility for the Bleek collection at UCT. Eberhard, along with Leonie Twentyman Jones, took charge of re-cataloguing the collection into the form in which we find it today.<sup>63</sup> Etaine Eberhard wrote formally about the making of the Bleek collection in a paper delivered to the Bleek-Lloyd conference in 1991, but which was published five years later.<sup>64</sup> It is interesting that Spohr's name was hardly mentioned in Eberhard's paper.<sup>65</sup> There was evidence in Spohr's papers of a professional familiarity existing between them, so the omission was most likely due to prevailing attitudes which assigned a neutral role to archivists and constructed archives as objective repositories of information rather than processes of knowledge production in which archivists played a structuring role.<sup>66</sup> In both typescript and published version, Eberhard described how books and pamphlets were placed in the appropriate section of the Library's stock. The remaining material comprised notebooks, "slips of paper" which made up the lexicon (originally received in 60 boxes), letters and draft letters, reports, diaries, genealogical material, manuscripts and typed notes, photographs, original drawings and newspaper clippings. Dr Bleek's granddaughter Dr K M F Scott contributed material during the 1950s and in 1988. Eberhard noted that a typescript of the Bushman Dictionary was donated by Prof J A Engelbrecht in 1961.<sup>67</sup>

## Passion and dedication

THUS, the Bleek collection can be seen to have been founded on the great passion and dedication of Dorothea Bleek, who not only continued the work of her father and aunt, but also jealously guarded and preserved the material output of their years of research. Dorothea Bleek's varied professional associations led to the material being donated to

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<sup>62</sup> Spohr himself becomes the subject of a bio-biographical sketch at around this time, a fact he communicates proudly in 1979 to former colleague, UCT librarian Immelman: Spohr to Immelman, 7 May 1979. BC 687. File marked GLW 82.

<sup>63</sup> Eberhard and Twentyman Jones.

<sup>64</sup> Deacon and Dowson, 1-5.

<sup>65</sup> Eberhard, "Wilhelm Bleek", 49-65. See also anonymous typescript titled "The Bleek Collection". Pink admin folder "BC151 Bleek collection – additional information", archivists' working files, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT. Pencilled note at end refers to Etaine [Eberhard] as having done most of the work on the Bleek collection. This typescript appears to be a draft of conference paper, and does not mention Spohr at all.

<sup>66</sup> For more on this line of thinking, see Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form", in Carolyn Hamilton *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive*, Cape Town: David Philip, 2002).

<sup>67</sup> "The Bleek Collection". Pink admin folder, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT.

the different institutions, and this fragmentation can be said to have contributed to the way in which some of the material has been interpreted. Furthermore, the consolidation of the Bleek collection at UCT in particular, shows itself to be a process dependent on the particular interests of a librarian-researcher charged with searching for and cataloguing the papers – as well as on broader concerns which may be overtly political. Spohr's interest in Bleek was undoubtedly spurred by their shared nationalities and political leanings. This, in turn, might be the reason why Spohr is so little interested in Lucy Lloyd. Eberhard noted that Dorothea Bleek had “no personal documents” among her papers, and that she was as “private” a person as her aunt Lucy Lloyd.<sup>68</sup>

As shown in both the theory and practice of archives as discussed in earlier chapters, documents, inventories and acquisition lists add layers to narratives told by documents themselves. Inventories, acquisition lists and the physical movement and transfer of documents and materials from one place to another, tell a story of archive formation which is at once haphazard and purposeful, spontaneous as well as studied. As I have shown in the discussion above, Dorothea Bleek was a critical agent in the initial establishment of the Bleek collection, for her part in treasuring and preserving the material outputs of the research undertaken by her father and aunt. Her continued scholarship in the field of African life and languages formed a link between the earlier research of Bleek and Lloyd and the preservation of their documents, and later contributed to the creation of an academic context and field of research in which the collection could be situated during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. If, as Foucault theorises, the arrangement or classification of documents is the critical variable in the way the past is accessed at a particular moment in society, it follows that Dorothea Bleek's decision to treasure and extend the “bushman researches” undertaken by her father and aunt, was the critical moment at which that past became possible.

Equally critical to the process of archive formation was Otto Spohr, whose dogged and determined investigations in archives both locally and abroad, added a great amount of essential detail to the books and manuscripts which Dorothea Bleek had donated to UCT some twenty years earlier. Indeed, Spohr's intervention has been indelibly inscribed into the collection at UCT through the presence of his research

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<sup>68</sup> Eberhard, “Wilhelm Bleek”, 63.

notes. Spohr's notes on the correspondence between Bleek and Sir George Grey are included under the category "Correspondence – W H I Bleek".<sup>69</sup> In addition, the abstracts, notes and lists Spohr made while writing his bio-bibliographical sketch of Bleek, as well as his card summaries of the courtship correspondence between Wilhelm and Jemima, are to be found in the Bleek catalogue under the category "Miscellaneous".<sup>70</sup> The courtship correspondence summaries suggest that Spohr may have been planning to publish on this topic. Spohr's work contributed a great deal of biographical knowledge about Bleek, and allowed the early contextualisation of the collection in terms of the heroic, gendered form in which we find it today. However, neither of Spohr's two publications contain reference to the 153 original notebooks recorded by Bleek and Lloyd, and which are now seen as the heart of UCT's collection. This supports the foundational lost and found narrative related by Hewitt, and points to a moment where chance intervened in the otherwise purposeful process of archive making.

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<sup>69</sup> BC 151, C10.19.1-C10.19.26;

<sup>70</sup> BC 151, K1.1; K1.2; K1.3.

## Chapter 4:

### Text and Context; The notebooks and knowledge production

*"There is an archive in Cape Town that holds the key to something that scholars and poets regard as a primordial South African identity. It is an archive that appears to lay open the Bushman soul, in his and her own words."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Dia!kwain's comments are about as close as a rock art researcher can get to interviewing the makers of Bushman imagery from long ago. In these twenty manuscript pages, Dia!kwain provides the key to recognising the motifs in the Bushman's paintings and engravings by linking them explicitly to the work of sorcerers."*<sup>2</sup>

*"If all humans are descendants of a KhoiSan foremother, we are the siblings, quarrelling over the family inheritance: our battles themselves becoming 'history'."*<sup>3</sup>

OVER the years, selections of /Xam folklore from the pages recorded by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd as part of their "bushman researches", has inspired a variety of texts, ranging from literature for children, to providing a basis for the interpretation of rock-art.<sup>4</sup> More recently, it has served as the inspiration for publications in which texts of /Xam folklore transcribed by Bleek or Lloyd, have been reworked by contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> Leon De Kock, "Songs of innocence; An edited collection of /Xam Bushman poetry harks back to a time before cynicism", *Sunday Times Lifestyle*, 16 May 2004: 13. The article is a review of Antjie Krog's book of poetry *the stars say 'tsau'* (op cit).

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy C Hollmann, Ed., *Customs and Beliefs of the /Xam Bushmen* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, n.d.), 218. This comment is made as introduction to the section *The //ke:n dance and sorcerers*, which appeared in Dorothea Bleek's edited contribution to *Bantu Studies* 9, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> Annie Gagiano, "'By What Authority?' Presentations of the Khoisan in South African English Poetry", on line at [http://singh.reshma.tripod.com/alternation/alternation6\\_1/11GAGI.htm](http://singh.reshma.tripod.com/alternation/alternation6_1/11GAGI.htm): 2. [22 March 2006].

<sup>4</sup> For children's literature see titles by Marguerite Poland (*The Mantis and the moon*, 1979; *The Wood-Ash Stars*, 1983), Jenny Seed (*Old Grandfather Mantis, Tales of the San*, 1992); for rock-art, see J D Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing – Symbolic meanings in southern San rock paintings* (London: Academic Press, 1981).

poets, writers and artists.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the story of the Bleek-Lloyd family and their “bushman” dependants, and materials from the resulting collections, have formed the basis of popular performances, in particular dance and community processions, and exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> Since the 1970s, material from the Bleek-Lloyd collection has been used by scholars from a range of academic disciplines including literature, fine art, archaeology, history, language, anthropology and music. Notebook texts and images have been re-deployed in different public and published contexts, particularly since the mid-1990s. The Unesco “Memory of the World” citation, granted in 1997, reflected how the Bleek-Lloyd collection had become recognised and revered as a cultural artefact of international importance. The Bleek and Lloyd notebooks have been referred to as a “Rosetta Stone which enabled scholars to decipher the meaning of Southern African rock art” and the texts contained therein are credited with contributing to “advances ... in the study of Australian and European rock art”.<sup>7</sup>

How does one begin to frame a context in which to discuss the various projects of knowledge production which have been associated with the making and remaking of the Bleek collection? Can the notebooks indeed be likened to the Rosetta Stone in terms of their ability to throw light on the meanings of the rock art of southern Africa – and even that of Australia? Can the Bleek-Lloyd collection be of use in ethnographies of Bushman groups remaining in the Kalahari, and assist us in understanding their marginal status? Or is the collection best used to describe the initially tentative and haphazard relationship which developed between two groups of people from vastly different backgrounds, and which led to a limited understanding between some of them? In this section of my research, I explore a selection of writings emanating from the

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<sup>5</sup> Such as Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Sound from the Thinking Strings, A visual, literary, archaeological and historical interpretation of the final years of /Xam life* (Cape Town: Axeage Private Press, 1991); and Pippa Skotnes, *Heaven's Things, A Story of the /Xam* (Cape Town, LLAREC, 1999). Also Alan James, *The First Bushman's path – stories, songs and testimonies of the /Xam of the northern Cape* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001); and Antjie Krog's *the stars say tsau ": /Xam poetry of Dia!kwain, Kweiten-ta-//ken, /A!kunta, /Han=kass'o and //Kabbo* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> For performances, I am thinking of the recent production *Rain in a Deadman's Footprints*, a tradition of performances which have taken place annually at the Clanwilliam art and performance project as described in Pippa Skotnes and Mark Fleishman, *A Story is the Wind, Representing time and space in San narratives* (Cape Town: LLAREC Series in Visual History, 2002). For exhibitions, see *The Moon as Shoe*, South African National Gallery 27 April – 30 June 2003, and eponymous catalogue (Szalay, op cit.); and */QE – The Power of Rock Art, Ancestors, rain-making and healing*, the rock art exhibit at the Iziko SA Museum.

<sup>7</sup> Draft motivation, undated typescript: 3-4; draft typescript attached to letter from Nigel Penn dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 1996: 3, facsimile from Peter Coates (of SA Library's Preservation Dept) of draft joint



archive, and describe them in terms of their association with particular projects of knowledge production. Following Foucault, this chapter presents an archaeology of the interpretations emanating from the Bleek-Lloyd collection, in which layers of discourse are examined in relation to the formation or presence of a particular body of knowledge or *episteme* in society.<sup>8</sup> The sheer embeddedness of power in text comes to mind when considering the Bleek and Lloyd project, and the many notebooks it generated.

Attending, as this chapter does, to aspects of “text” and “context” in relation to this early research project, needs itself to be contextualised as an activity of postcolonialism, with its concern to problematise issues such as authorship and history, and notions of the particular and the contingent. Such questions of power, authorship, contingency, in relation to research and text did not concern either Bleek or Lloyd, or indeed, any of their intellectual associates at the time of their research. In the context of the emerging discipline of anthropology, Bleek and Lloyd’s interest in “bushman” language sprang initially from a transcendental project to trace the beginnings of human culture.

In the texts under consideration in this chapter, it is interesting to consider to what extent interpretations of the notebooks, and the research encounters themselves, have been situated in a postcolonial perspective which pays attention to aspects such as power, context, authorship and narrative. Indeed, scholarly work drawing upon the Bleek/Lloyd notebooks needs to be contextualised in terms of an historicised view of the work of academy itself. This perspective should necessarily acknowledge the theoretical crises in academic institutions in America and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, and which ushered in the postcolonial turn of mind. A further feature of the more recent writings and performance emanating from the collection is the way in which they highlight the tensions between essentialist and universalist ideas of culture and identity on the one hand, and between notions of copyright, intellectual property and authorship on the other. As I will discuss here, these tensions appear to be inherent – and unresolved, in the very nature of postcolonialist and postmodernist writings.

To start with, it needs to be acknowledged that materials from the collection have been worked on almost continuously since the origination of the notebooks in

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nomination form attached to letter from University Librarian A.S.C. Hooper, 14 October 1996: 5; all in BC 151: Bleek Collection – Memory of the World Programme.

<sup>8</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Transl., A M Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989).

terms of the motivations of classical philology. The writings associated most immediately with the research project – the reports to the Cape Parliament tabled by both Bleek and Lloyd, during the early stages of research, confirm the origination of the notebook texts in the spirit of Wilhelm Bleek’s particular notions of classical philology as a study which could offer an explanation as to the origins of humankind. Thus, his preliminary comparison of “Bushman” with “Hottentot” allowed Bleek to draw the conclusion that although the languages shared common characteristics, few meaningful similarities could be found. He wrote: “...the Bushman language is certainly not nearer akin to the Hottentot than e.g. the English language is to the Latin; but it may be that the distance between the Bushman and Hottentot is indeed far greater than between the two above-mentioned languages”.<sup>9</sup> His solicitation of government support for his project however, meant the addition of an overtly political layer to the project. In this context, the collection, translation and publication of “Native Literature” is offered as an opportunity to “throw much light upon the workings of the native mind in the different nations living in or near the Colony”.<sup>10</sup> Along with the vocabularies collected by colonial missionaries, then, Bleek’s “bushman researches” were offered as part of the colonial government’s developing technologies of surveillance and control with which the emerging state attempted to bolster power in that particular periphery of empire.<sup>11</sup>

Lucy Lloyd’s interest in collecting cultural as well as linguistic details from her informants was evidenced in her report to the Cape Parliament in 1889 in which she referred to “a partial resemblance between the language of the Grass Bushmen, and that spoken by the !kun”.<sup>12</sup> In the same report she displayed detailed knowledge of and interest in the different kinds of arrows which had been made by the various dependents she had interviewed.<sup>13</sup> In 1879, while in the throes of continuing research with /Han=kass’o, Piet Lynx, and the !Kung boys !Nanni and Tamme, Lloyd played a prominent role in the establishment of the *Folklore Journal*, the first ethnographic

<sup>9</sup> Bleek, W H I, “Report of Dr Bleek concerning his Researches into the Bushman Language and Customs, presented to the Honourable the House of Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor” (Cape Town, 1873), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Bleek, “Report of Dr Bleek”, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, Transl., Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage, 1995), 104-131.

<sup>12</sup> L C Lloyd, *A Short Account of Further Bushman Material Collected - Third Report concerning Bushman Researches, presented to both Houses of the Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, by command of His Excellency the Governor* (London: David Nutt, 1889), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Lloyd, *A Short Account*, 5.

journal to be published in South Africa. At the same time, she served as secretary of the South African Folklore Society, and her interest in rock art was confirmed by her later endeavours to have published the work of G W Stow. It is in the light of this interest in folklore and ethnography over and above that of classical linguistics, that Lloyd's publication in 1911 of *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* should be situated. Lloyd's honorary doctorate, conferred in 1912 by the then University of the Cape of Good Hope (now University of Cape Town), was in the field of literature – a precursor to current interests in the notebook texts as “originary literature”.<sup>14</sup>

Following Lloyd in framing the notebook texts as folklore or “native” literature for a metropolitan audience, Dorothea Bleek used the notebooks as source for her folktale collection *The Mantis and his Friends*, which was published by Maskew Miller in 1923. Later, Dorothea Bleek's edited versions of notebook texts appeared in the journal *Bantu Studies* during the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> The period of publishing by those personally and intimately involved with the researchers and their work, ended with Dorothea Bleek's posthumous publication of *A Bushman Dictionary* in 1956.<sup>16</sup> Already, in this period of publishing emanating from the early collection of Bleek materials, can be discerned shifts in the disciplinary boundaries and discourses which the notebook texts were contributing knowledge to. While Lloyd's *Specimens* offered folktales in keeping with romantic notions about “native literature” and the quest to preserve that which was “disappearing”, the articles edited by Dorothea Bleek appeared in a journal more overtly associated with essentialist ethnography and the typology of race. With her *Bantu Studies* submissions, Dorothea Bleek joined early anthropologists and linguists such as L F Maingard, E J Dunn, and I Schapera in drawing boundaries for the formation of a group of scientific and academic fields of study which were later to serve state-sponsored apartheid in South Africa from 1948 onwards.

## **Ethnography and rock art**

AFTER a gap in activity during the 1960s, the notebooks were “rediscovered” in the early 1970s by Roger Hewitt, whose ethnographic study *Structure, Meaning and Ritual*

<sup>14</sup> Lloyd was the first woman to be so honoured by the then University of the Cape of Good Hope.

<sup>15</sup> Dorothea Bleek's edited versions of the notebooks were published in nine parts in the journal *Bantu Studies* from 1931 to 1936. See Hollmann for an annotated re-presentation of the *Bantu Studies* material.

<sup>16</sup> Dorothea Frances Bleek, *A Bushman Dictionary* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1956).

in the *Narratives of the Southern San* was published in 1986.<sup>17</sup> In South Africa, Wits archaeologist J David Lewis-Williams was working on the Bleek-Lloyd material at more or less the same time, using the notebooks texts to provide an ethnographic basis for the interpretation of rock art. According to UCT Special Collections librarian Etaine Eberhard, the notebooks were microfilmed and sent to Wits to assist Lewis-Williams with his research.<sup>18</sup> Records in the archivists' files at UCT show that the notebook pages were microfilmed in 1973.<sup>19</sup> Lewis-Williams's book, *Believing and Seeing: Symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings* catapulted the notebook texts onto the archaeological scene. This publication, based on Lewis-Williams's landmark doctoral thesis which used Bleek and Lloyd's notebook texts to argue for a shamanist interpretation of rock art sites across southern Africa, led to a substantial reworking of theories around rock-art interpretation which remain influential to this day.<sup>20</sup> Lewis-Williams acknowledged that problems of language, the dictation process and subject-matter all had bearing on the texts emanating from the research encounters. He contextualised his rock art interpretations by describing the initial programme of vocabulary development used by Bleek early in the project; the delays which resulted from informants not being used to dictation processes; as well as the interpretative difficulties and fragmentation which arose from the nature of the research encounters.<sup>21</sup>

While prepared to concede to a certain amount of disturbance and negotiation in the research relationship between Bleek/Lloyd and their informants, Lewis-Williams did not overtly attend to questions of power, gender or authorship. He presented biographical details about Bleek and Lloyd and their dependents, to the extent of providing a positivist backdrop for his own research interests. Lewis-Williams framed Bleek as sympathetic right from the beginning to a perceived intellectual sophistication

<sup>17</sup> See Roger L Hewitt, "An Ethnographic Sketch of the /Xam" in Miklos Szalay, Ed., *The Moon as Shoe: Drawings of the San* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2002), 33-34, for Hewitt's version of the loss, sleuthing and "rediscovery" of the notebooks in the early 1970s. My discussion of this episode in the "life" of the archive is in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>18</sup> Personal communication, Etaine Eberhardt, April 19 and May 6, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Blue file cards dated 13.6.73, marked "T A Simons for photographic"; typescripts headed Notebook ... Pages ... Total, dated 11.9.73 and signed Eberhard and T A Simons; both in BC151 Bleek Collection, Information re Provenance, Manuscripts and Archives, UCT.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing*.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing*, 28-30. "The degree to which this laborious process [of transcribing] might have affected the recording of the material is difficult to assess." (29); "Another difficulty in assessing the material recorded by the Bleeks is that we do not always know what led the informants to offer a particular narrative." (30).

of his /Xam interviewees, and inspired by the rock art samples obtained from Stow.<sup>22</sup> However, this appreciation of rock art and intellectual traditions was reached finally in the months before Bleek's death. The earlier more baldly racial underpinnings of Bleek's research are largely effaced in this scenario. Lewis-Williams thus declined to expand on the context contained within the Bleek-Lloyd archives, as his research centred on the interpretation of rock art and on establishing the boundaries and validity of his methodological underpinnings. For Lewis-Williams, the Bleek/Lloyd collection therefore provided notebook texts to inform an interpretation of rock art. In this paradigm, the particular and contingent details underpinning the gathering of those texts were effaced.<sup>23</sup>

Also deploying the Bleek-Lloyd research project in the production of archaeological knowledge is Janette Deacon. Deacon uses the notebooks to inform her disciplinary interest in material archaeology.<sup>24</sup> Beyond providing a broad chronology of the Bleek and Lloyd programme of interviews with their informants, she does not deconstruct particular details of research encounters, nor speculate how they may have come about or been influenced by asymmetrical paradigms of power. Deacon quotes from the notebook transcriptions where what is said supports her archaeological interests, such as: “//Kabbo explained that stone knives were used to cut up game when metal ones were not available”.<sup>25</sup> Deacon selects information she considers to be of “ethno-archaeological significance” from the notebooks.<sup>26</sup> She uses the notebooks selectively as a template for archaeological investigation which she carries out according to strict methodological/scientific parameters.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, this reveals the silences that are contained within the space between text (as written in the notebooks)

<sup>22</sup> See especially J David Lewis-Williams, “The Ideas Generally Entertained with Regard to the Bushmen and their Mental Condition” in Pippa Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 307-313.

<sup>23</sup> A more contingent and nuanced reading of the research relationship between Bleek, Lloyd and their dependents is presented in J D Lewis-Williams, Ed., *Stories that Float from Afar: Ancestral Folklore of the San of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), especially 9-12. Most recently, in press reports around the plagiarism spat between Antjie Krog and Stephen Watson, Lewis-Williams is quoted as saying he disliked the versification of Bleek-Lloyd material because it amounted to “prettyfying a rather tragic situation” (see Jacobson 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Janette Deacon, “Archeology of the Flat and Grass Bushmen” in Deacon Janette and Thomas A Dowson (eds) *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), 245-270. Although published in 1996, the papers in this publication were delivered at a conference held five years earlier.

<sup>25</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 257.

<sup>26</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 259.

<sup>27</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 259-269. See also Janette Deacon, “Arrows as Agents of Belief Amongst the /Xam Bushmen”, *Margaret Shaw Lecture 3* (Cape Town: South African Museum, 1992).

and scientific evidence (as revealed by archaeological method), as the notebooks often fail to provide sufficient textual detail to corroborate evidence obtained through the exercise of scientific method.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Deacon uses archaeological evidence to show the extent to which the Bleek-Lloyd informants had had contact with other groups in their living areas, as well as to make the point that their lifestyle “had become an anachronism, and they were essentially destitute”.<sup>29</sup> To this extent, her research lays bare the tensions embedded in contrasts between the overarching historical contexts of the time, and later romantic, heroised interpretations of the notebook texts and research encounters.

In her use of the notebook texts, and other historical evidence taken from the writings of travellers of the time,<sup>30</sup> Deacon’s interpretations were based on a reading which assumed the continuous transmission of thought from informant through researcher into notebook. Here, text is read as authoritative, and no space is made in which to attend to the particularities of individual research encounters.

In the production of knowledge around the disciplines of archaeology and the study of rock art, then, /Xam texts recorded by Bleek and Lloyd have, in association with more recent ethnography recorded among the ju/’hoansi of the Kalahari, been deployed in the interpretation of rock art right up to the present. A leading example is */Qe – The Power of Rock Art, Ancestors, rain-making and healing*. This, Iziko SA Museum’s reconfigured rock art exhibit, draws on statements and narratives from the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks to explain and interpret rock art from different sites in southern Africa, and includes images of Lucy Lloyd, Wilhelm Bleek and some of their /Xam dependents from the collection, in the installation.<sup>31</sup> In a related work, UCT archaeologist John Parkington refers to the Bleek-Lloyd collection as facilitating the interpretation of rock art drawn at sites across southern Africa, from the Cederberg in the Western Cape, through the Drakensberg Mountains, to the Matopos hills in Zimbabwe.<sup>32</sup> His guide to rock art sites in the Clanwilliam Cederberg was launched at the SA Museum’s */Qe* exhibition opening. In two recent publications, direct links were made between /Xam dependants interviewed by Bleek and/or Lloyd, and a shamanist interpretation of rock

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<sup>28</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 267-269.

<sup>29</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 265.

<sup>30</sup> Deacon, “Archeology”, 257. See her reference to Lichtenstein who met San in the Karreeberge in May/June 1805.

<sup>31</sup> The exhibition opened in December 2003.

art. Writing in the introduction to his 1991 volume *Return of the Moon: Versions from the /Xam*, Stephen Watson credited //Kabbo, Dia!kwain and /Han=kasso with facilitating the interpretation of the “magnificent tradition” of rock painting, and, as did Jeremy Hollman as cited in the epigraph to this chapter.<sup>33</sup> As the foregoing discussion asserts, associations between the Bleek-Lloyd collection, notebook interpretations, and the disciplines of archaeology and the related study of rock art, are firmly entrenched. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a discussion of the rock art of southern Africa without reference to the Bleek-Lloyd collection.

By the 1980s, moreover, the notebooks were being “mined” by researchers from a range of disciplines including art, archaeology, linguistics, history, anthropology, and literature. Following Lewis-Williams and Deacon, whose use of the notebook texts affirmed the ethnographic underpinnings of much of archaeological practice, anthropologists such as Guenther and Bieseke used the same archive as a more overtly ethnographic text. Guenther used the /Xam narratives recorded by Bleek and Lloyd to inform his fieldwork among the Ghanzi of Botswana in the late 1960s.<sup>34</sup> While acknowledging the need for particular, contingent and historically and socially contextualised interpretations of “folklore”, elsewhere Guenther used notebook narratives to inform a commentary on the “mythological traditions of other San people, as well as with the mythological tradition of their herding cousins, the Khoi”.<sup>35</sup> This is a methodology followed by Bieseke, who uses Lucy Lloyd’s transcriptions of interviews with the !Kung boys, as well as Lloyd’s annotations on their drawings, to inform her fieldwork among, and writings about, the Kalahari Ju/’hoan.<sup>36</sup> Writing in a foreword to the 2001 reprint of *Specimens*, Bieseke argues that the Bleek and Lloyd collection at

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<sup>32</sup> John Parkington, *The mantis, the eland and the hunter* (Cape Town: Krakadouw Trust, 2002), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Watson, *Return of the Moon: Versions from the /Xam* (Cape Town: Carrefour Press, 1991), 9. Commenting on the limited biographical information available on the informants, Watson writes: “But all such biographical details seem incidental when set beside what these men achieved as narrators. If it is now widely recognised that Bushman rock art possesses, in its finest examples, a power and complexity easily the equal of the great touchstones of painting elsewhere in the world, then it is chiefly through //Kabbo, Dia!kwain and /Han=kasso that we have evidence for what this magnificent tradition of painting might lead us to assume: an equivalent power, equal depth and corresponding beauty in their oral traditions.”

<sup>34</sup> Mathias Guenther, “From ‘Lords of the Desert’ to ‘Rubbish People’: The Colonial and Contemporary State of the Nharo of Botswana” in Skotnes, Ed., *Miscast*, 225-226.

<sup>35</sup> See respectively Mathias Guenther, 1996. “Attempting to Contextualise /Xam Oral Tradition” in Deacon and Dowson, 77-99; and Mathias Guenther, “On /Xam San Folklore” in Szalay, 91-92, and especially 92-97.

<sup>36</sup> Megan Bieseke, “A Sketch of !Xun Ethnography” in Szalay, 53-66. See note 4 for reference to fieldwork conducted earlier and reported in Megan Bieseke, *Women Like Meat: The Folklore and Foraging Ideology of the Kalahari Ju/’hoan* (Johannesburg: Bloomington, 1993).

UCT constituted “the strongest key” with which to unlock the “false and frozen equation” through which past and present /Xam and other San groups of southern Africa had been “quintessentially conflated under the rubric of primitive simplicity”.<sup>37</sup> For Bieseles, a screen woven out of romantic ideas about their simplicity and assumptions about their obscure and difficult language, had been “interposed between the San’s present realities and outside understanding”. This screen had obscured the enduring relationships of these groups’ ideologies to those of the departed /Xam. Bieseles argued that the re-issue of *Specimens* would “make possible the reading of the exact words of an extinct people”, and “go a long way towards humanising both public and academic understanding” of the issues facing San groups in general.<sup>38</sup>

### Compressing space and time

THESE extrapolations of the unique and particular notebook texts range geographically across south and central southern Africa (Angola, Namibia and the Kalahari). In time they encompass nearly 100 years (from interviews done in the closing decades of the nineteenth century to fieldwork carried out in the middle decades of the twentieth), and among groups of people, they cover a range of what are today counted as separate national identities. In this way, archival material which originated in a Mowbray sitting room in colonial Cape Town, is stretched in chronological time and geographical space, to contribute to fields of academic knowledge which were not formalised at the time of its making. In so doing, it provides an example of how the archive permits and negotiates the compression of time and space, and facilitates the production of ethnographic knowledge around the term “bushman”.

Other academics have read the notebooks as a narrative of the decline and death of a particular collection of interrelated linguistic traditions. According to Traill, this decline began prior to the arrival of settlers in the northern regions of the Cape Colony, and thus predated the spaces and times encompassed in the narratives of //Kabbo and the other dependents.<sup>39</sup> Linguistics and the close reading of speech patterns in some of the narratives have thus been used to show the extent to which the notebook transcriptions could disguise the reality of bi-lingualism which already existed among

<sup>37</sup> Megan Bieseles, “Foreword” in W H I Bleek and L C Lloyd, Ed., *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 2001 [1911]).

<sup>38</sup> Bieseles, “Foreword”, II.

<sup>39</sup> Anthony Traill, “!Khwa-Ka Hhouiten Hhouiten ‘The Rush of the Storm’: The Linguistic Death of /Xam” in Skotnes, *Miscast*, 161-183.



the /Xam dependents by the time the project began in 1870. Traill uses the notebook texts to tell a detailed story of social disintegration and the mixing between language groups, which confirmed that “language shift” had evolved among /Xam speakers for 100 years before what has been couched as an abrupt extinction of the language immediately after the interviewing project began.<sup>40</sup> This perspective allows a reading of the archive which acknowledges rupture, silence, and contradiction, in contrast to other readings where the notebook texts are constructed in the service of essentialised knowledge of an authentic, pristine social, cultural or ethnic “other”.

In a related field, anthropologist Robert Thornton studied Bleek’s work on southern African languages.<sup>41</sup> Following the librarian Spohr, Thornton extracted materials from the Bleek-Lloyd collection to support his framing of Bleek as a pioneering liberal humanist whose research methods and beliefs were way ahead of those of his time.<sup>42</sup> Thornton paid little attention to the particulars of the micro context of Bleek’s actual interviews with /Xam prisoners. Rather, he situated his research in its macro context – that of the western intellectual traditions within which Bleek was working. He argued that Bleek was profoundly influenced by his philosophical beliefs in a universalist monogenetic source of mankind, and cited Bleek’s letter to his cousin Haeckel as evidence in support of this view.<sup>43</sup> Thornton argued that Bleek’s disciplinary influence was philology, and pointed out that Bleek was innovative in his methodological approach to the discipline. In choosing to study “spoken” language, Bleek was breaking out of the disciplinary paradigm supported by established intellectual thought in Europe with its focus on the philological study of Biblical and other ancient – and even modern languages, as texts.<sup>44</sup>

For Thornton, Bleek’s “groundbreaking” work of defining a “new field of intellectual inquiry” was important because it fostered “a greater and more widespread appreciation of African literatures and languages”.<sup>45</sup> He positioned Bleek’s work on the cusp of the new disciplines of ethnology, and later anthropology, a positioning which

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<sup>40</sup> Traill, 163-165.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Thornton, “‘This Dying Out Race’ W H I Bleek’s approach to the languages of Southern Africa” in *Social Dynamics*, Vol 9, No 2 (December 1983): 1-10.

<sup>42</sup> Thornton, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Thornton, 6. In this letter, Bleek took issue with Haeckel’s denial of a “single common origin of humankind”.

<sup>44</sup> Thornton, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Thornton, 7.

acknowledged Bleek's wide influence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on both anthropology, and the other life sciences, without limiting the influence to within narrow disciplinary boundaries.<sup>46</sup> Thornton's reading of the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks, then, was done in a way that celebrated the achievements of the individual researcher, and positioned him in a chronology marking the progress of western (male) thought. Although following Spohr in drawing attention to Bleek's research in Natal, Thornton, like Spohr, presents Bleek's research as continuous, authoritative and monolithic. No attempt is made to reveal the particularities and contexts of individual research encounters, nor of the fractures, silences and contradictions which the archival record of these may throw up.

### Flowering of interest

A GATHERING of a range of disciplinary interests in the Bleek-Lloyd materials was reflected at the 1991 conference *Bleek and Lloyd: 1870-1991*, which drew thirty scholars from South Africa, Namibia, Germany, the United States, Canada, and Britain, to Cape Town from September 9 to 11. Among these were Guenther, Lewis-Williams, Deacon, Biesele and Skotnes, whose deployments of the archive have been touched on earlier. Indeed, the 1990s saw a great flowering of interest in the notebook texts with Skotnes and Watson's "art book" *Sounds from the Thinking Strings* further broadening interpretations of the archive and its images to encompass literary and artistic dimensions.<sup>47</sup> As described in the introduction to this dissertation, the *Miscast* installation exhibition of 1996 constituted a landmark moment in the trajectory of interpretations of the Bleek-Lloyd materials. The exhibition constituted an important event in establishing a popular, public – even political, profile for the Bleek-Lloyd archive. An important and lasting outcome of the exhibition was the establishment of LLAREC, the *Lucy Lloyd Archive Resource and Exhibition Centre*, at UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Art. This research centre, directed by Pippa Skotnes, was initially established to house part of the documents and images from the exhibition. One of the main aims of LLAREC is the "promotion of curatorship (including digital curatorship) as both a form of fine arts practice and as a means to preserve and publish material of historical, archaeological and cultural significance", as well as the promotion of

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<sup>46</sup> Thornton, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Skotnes, Pippa, Ed., *Sound from the Thinking Strings, A visual, literary, archaeological and historical interpretation of the final years of /Xam life* (Cape Town: Axeage Private Press, 1991).

knowledge through visual exegesis”.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the exhibition gave lasting material form – in the collection of academic papers which was published in a companion volume, to cross and inter-disciplinary evocations of the notebook texts and related archival materials.<sup>49</sup> Edited by Skotnes, the volume gave a synthesis of the range of academic projects, some dealt with here and in other chapters of this dissertation, which were linked to various aspects of the Bleek-Lloyd materials.

## Reading across the record

The re-presentation of the Bleek-Lloyd materials in the art gallery as exhibit/installation signalled an inter disciplinary of the archive which sought to set text and image alongside the ethnographic object, and encourage the construction of knowledge through the visual. In *Miscast*, Skotnes aimed to produce the archive in terms of its “visual presence” with a structure that required “that it be read, not as a narrative, or a set of narratives, but as a complex network interweaving ideas and stories that link one with the other”.<sup>50</sup> Her installation sought to access “meaning present in the formal arrangement of things”, and knowledge which could not “be realised by the written word”, to go beyond the knowledge that is capable of encryption in text.<sup>51</sup> Reinvented as fine art installation, the Bleek-Lloyd materials were, via *Miscast*, projected into the realms of the post-modern, beyond the reach of disciplinary definitions and academic boundaries. Instead, the installation sought to contest the boundaries of knowledge constructed by the visual, contribute to debates around issues of representation, and moreover, encourage a questioning around the nature of knowledge construction itself.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the exhibition/installation as mode of expression showed the archive dealing with questions of representation, the role of the visual, and the limits of knowledge acquired through a simple reading of texts. But, perhaps because the project was wedded to the work of the curator-artist, it seemed to stop short of providing a meaningful place for the reconstitution of marginalised voices.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.loydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/dynapage.jsp?id=23> [17 March 2006].

<sup>49</sup> Pippa Skotnes, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996).

<sup>50</sup> Skotnes, *Miscast*, 23.

<sup>51</sup> Skotnes, *Miscast*, 23.

<sup>52</sup> Skotnes, *Miscast*, 20.

<sup>53</sup> The description “curator-artist” is extrapolated after Marilyn Martin’s framing of curatorship itself as a creative act. See Marilyn Martin, “Foreward” in Skotnes, *Miscast*, 10.

Indeed, can the archive construct a knowledge of the postcolonial, with its implication of the need for redress? Moving the Bleek-Lloyd materials into the realm of the postcolonial requires that space be made for the articulation of subaltern voices. Writing against settled interpretations of the Bleek-Lloyd materials means using the archive in a way that allows all its elements to interact. Reading the notebooks as a “record of ‘situated discourse’” allows space for a grounded impression of the early interactions between Bleek and Lloyd and their dependants.<sup>54</sup> It acknowledges the fact that research, like all social interactions, involves negotiation, misunderstanding, contradiction, and grappling, as well as the relations of power between the parties.<sup>55</sup> Bank argues that elements of the interactions, for instance, the language gulf between researchers and their dependants, the books they used as communication aids initially, the possibility of misunderstandings and misspellings, even the physical arrangement of the research space, are important aspects implicating later interpretations of archival materials.

In paying close attention to the particularities of the research encounters, Bank writes against the notion that the notebook transcriptions represent elements of “Bushman folklore” which have been “directly transmitted from the informants’ memories via the hands of the researchers onto the pages of notebooks”.<sup>56</sup> He argues that the apparently seamless narratives of folklore and salvage ethnography which have emerged in disciplinary knowledge built on the notebook texts, have often failed to attend to the multiple, contingent, power-laden contexts of the research encounters themselves.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the notebooks have elsewhere been interpreted on the basis of Bleek and Lloyd’s research having been carried out, right from the start, in a spirit of mutual respect (particularly in the case of interactions with /Kabbo), and conviviality – even heroism.<sup>58</sup> In this interpretation, they are framed as two men joined in a battle to salvage what they can of dying “bushman” folklore. This discourse is one that continues to draw a distinction between “colonial and bushman worlds”<sup>59</sup>, and feeds contemporary research practice where academics continue to distinguish between themselves and their object of research (self and other).

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<sup>54</sup> Andrew Bank, “From Pictures to Performance: Early Learning at the Hill” in *Kronos*, 28 (November 2002): 71.

<sup>55</sup> Bank, “Early Learning”, 81-91.

<sup>56</sup> Bank, “Early Learning”, 71.

<sup>57</sup> Bank, “Early Learning”, 68-72.

<sup>58</sup> See particularly Michael Godby, “Images of /Kabbo” in Skotnes, *Miscast*, 115-128.

Moreover, the archive, and the research-process itself, can become implicated in myth-making.<sup>60</sup> Academic knowledge can, through cross-referencing and shared sources, contribute to the construction of a body of knowledge which suits a particular ideological slant.<sup>61</sup> The trap of entrenching accepted narratives may be avoided by paying as close attention as possible to the context of individual research encounters. Thus, Bank's reading of early encounters between Bleek or Lloyd and /A!kunta can be seen as an intervention against entrenched interpretations of the Bleek-Lloyd materials. This interpretation writes against homogenised readings of /A!kunta, for instance, as "conceited", and frames him instead, in his subjective context as ex-prisoner and survivor of colonial attack, as young, traumatised and vulnerable.<sup>62</sup> This is a deconstructionist approach to the notebooks, where context is as important as the subjects involved in the research encounter, where space is made for the limited articulation of subaltern voices, and for the presence of contradiction, silence and fracture. As much attention is paid to the spatial and psychological elements of the research encounter – its context, as is paid to the outcomes of the research. Thus, the encounters are returned to a human dimension, instead of the mythological plane to which they sometimes ascend.

Elsewhere, Bank's reading of //Kabbo's image allows anthropometric photography to be reconstituted.<sup>63</sup> Through acknowledgement of the bump on //Kabbo's shoulder, we travel back in time to the spaces of /Kabbo's pre-prison life with his wife, and also forward in his relationship with Bleek – beyond the awkward photographic occasion at the Breakwater prison, past the early and more difficult months of research encounters at The Hill, to moments when the relationship between them had improved.<sup>64</sup> Thus, space is made for marginalised voices to be heard in a reading which is based on a mix of the material elements of the collection, encompassing images read alongside notebook texts, marginal notes and correspondence. This gives rise to a detailed layering of events as opposed to a more generalised view as has been offered

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<sup>59</sup> Bank, "Early Learning", 71.

<sup>60</sup> See the opening phrase, "There is a story that scholars like to tell..." in Bank, "Early Learning", 66.

<sup>61</sup> Bank, "Early Learning", 70-71.

<sup>62</sup> Bank, "Early Learning", 100. See also 96, where the description of Bleek's attempts to coerce /A!kunta to provide sexually explicit terms provides a particularly poignant example of the discomfort which could be experienced by informants at moments in the research process.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew Bank, "Photographs and body marks: Wilhelm Bleek's Breakwater Project, Nov 1870-Dec 1871". Paper delivered to the South African and Contemporary History Seminar (University of the Western Cape, 19 October 2004).

<sup>64</sup> Bank, "Photographs", 8.

by other interpretations more keenly influenced by rules of classification that separate disparate materials in the collection, or where images are used in a simple, descriptive capacity.

The foregoing discussion gives an indication of the steadily increasing degree of academic and popular activity around the Bleek-Lloyd collection which has been a feature of the past 20 years. Indeed, the growing fascination with which the Bleek and Lloyd materials have been regarded in the field of literary studies can be seen in the sustained use over many years, of the notebook narratives as interpretative and/or inspirational basis for poetic adaptations.<sup>65</sup> It is suggested that D H Lawrence's most important book of poems, *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, was partly inspired by a reading of *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*.<sup>66</sup> Lawrence obtained a copy of *Specimens* from the South African artist Jan Juta when the two men met during Lawrence's Mediterranean tour of 1920/21.<sup>67</sup> Lawrence's use of the notebook texts, however, was at the level of thought, and Heywood argued that the evolutionary ideas of Haeckel were an abiding concern of the poet. In contrast, versions of the notebook texts which have been offered by contemporary writers such as James follow the /Xam use of diction and language more closely, with the texts adapted to suit literary conventions of poetry and verse.

James is occupied with a textual analysis of /Xam culture which is based on transcriptions of their songs. I argue that his approach, although overtly literary, is moulded by the disciplinary concerns of anthropology. His findings are explained in terms of specific categories sanctioned by anthropology – such as kinship, ritual, social structures, food sources. James follows Biesele in tracking the “appearance” of animals through songs, narratives and incantations, and using the animals – as Biesele suggests the Ju/'hoan do, as “goods to think with”.<sup>68</sup> This “/Xam-centred” mode of interpretation

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<sup>65</sup> See the comprehensive examination of “evocations and representations in English of people who spoke their own San and Khoikhoi languages”, in Annie Gagiano, “‘By What Authority?’ Presentations of the Khoisan in South African English Poetry”, on line at [http://singh.reshma.tripod.com/alternation/alternation6\\_1/11GAGI.htm](http://singh.reshma.tripod.com/alternation/alternation6_1/11GAGI.htm) [22 March 2006]. The citation is on page 1 of the paper, italics in original.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Heywood, “Birds, Beasts and Flowers: The Evolutionary Context and Lawrence's African Literary Source”, *D H Lawrence Review*, 15 (1982): 87-105. A copy of this journal article is filed in BC 151 Bleek Collection – additional information, marked with a handwritten note “from C Heywood with thanks – to Jagger Library, Feb '84”.

<sup>67</sup> Heywood, 87. Juta contributed illustrations to Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* and also painted portraits of the poet.

<sup>68</sup> Alan James, *The First Bushman's Path: Stories, Songs and Testimonies of the /Xam of the Northern Cape* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001), 177.

amounts to a re-invention of anthropological method which hopes to sideline the effects of the researcher's subjectivity by placing the object/subject of the research (here, the Breakwater prisoners), at its centre – a postcolonial decentering of a sort. He alerts the reader to the limits of his interpretations by drawing attention to the fact that since many of the songs and incantations were performative, one is unable to experience all the nuances of their meanings from the printed version. In relation to “//Kabbo sings the animals” the incantation of animal names is described as a special mode of praise poetry that was neither narrative nor descriptive, but that was an “intense form of oral performance” that could not be represented adequately in oral form.<sup>69</sup>

## Literary uses

MY reading of James suggests that his work could be inserted into a “master narrative” about the search for the beginnings of humanity which has been re-invented for postcolonial times. The way James has chosen to interpret the /Xam songs and incantations seems to emphasise their status as First People. The songs are said to survive from a time when boundaries between animals and humans were porous and flexible. In this interpretation of the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks, the /Xam texts are being inserted at the beginning of a linear, evolutionary chronology, at the start of what we in the west understand as the inevitable march of time (history) from primitive beginnings progressively moving forward towards a perfect (civilised) end-point. Furthermore, the songs are presented as remnants from lost, mythical and transcendental time, with redemptive possibilities for those who interact with these surviving cultural/phonological/linguistic fragments of an ancient people.

What these literary uses of the Bleek-Lloyd materials have laid bare, are the tensions inherent within postmodernist assumptions about authorship and the autonomy of texts, the boundaries between fact and fiction, and the questions of cultural sharing and collective memory against individual intellectual ownership and copyright. The public row between academic Stephen Watson and writer Antjie Krog over their respective reworking of the notebook texts could lead to a new deployment of the Bleek-Lloyd materials in the production of knowledge around the law of copyright.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> James, 175.

<sup>70</sup> Eve Gray, copyright consultant for publisher Random House and LitNet, is quoted as saying that the material used by Bleek and Lloyd is out of copyright and in the public domain where it is “regarded as a

The allegations have caused a storm in the academic community of Cape Town, with suggestions being made of institutional rivalry and conflict between language groups, as being among the underlying causes of the argument.<sup>71</sup> Yet, whether legal action results from Watson's accusations of plagiarism or not, what the spat does is to crystallise some of the issues in relation to the production of the notebook texts in the field of literary studies.<sup>72</sup> Battle lines have been drawn in the online chat room LitNet, where articles either in support or condemnation of either of the protagonists, continue to flow in. The question of academic credentials and acceptable forms of scholarship have been raised, as is that of the right to financial profit from an expropriation of texts originated by others.<sup>73</sup>

## Authorship and plagiarism

It is in this area, therefore, that attention is drawn to crucial questions of authorship and plagiarism, cultural sharing against appropriation or exploitation, and disciplinary demands for the adequate acknowledgement of sources against the creative act of writing. All these are issues currently being debated throughout the academy. While the Watson-Krog argument homes in on two renditions of the notebook texts, it also focuses attention on the respective authors rather than questioning their justification in appropriating the texts in the way that they do.<sup>74</sup> Gagiano casts both texts as examples of "cultural exploitation".<sup>75</sup> Indeed, in the context of this dissertation, bigger questions need to be asked – as Gagiano does in relation to English poetry, of the role of the

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site of collective memory, by definition meant for sharing and transmission" (see Maureen Isaacson, "Repitition and the other perils of plagiarism", *Sunday Independent*, 5 March 2006, 18). However, Lesley Hart, UCT's manager of Special Collections Information Services in the Manuscripts and Archives department, UCT Libraries, said copyright of the notebook texts was held by the University of Cape Town (personal communication, 22 March 2006).

<sup>71</sup> See Colin Bower, "Krog: Publishers may sue", online at [http://www.mg.co.za/printPage.aspx?area=insight/insight\\_national/&articleId=265244](http://www.mg.co.za/printPage.aspx?area=insight/insight_national/&articleId=265244) [22 March 2006]. See also Isaacson, 18.

<sup>72</sup> See Stephen Watson, "Annals of Plagiarism: Antjie Krog and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection", *New Contrast* 127 (2006). Online at <http://www.suntimes.co.za/2006/02/19/watson.pdf> [8 March 2006]

<sup>73</sup> On scholarship and credentials, see Rosaline Morris, "On Watson, Krog and 'plagiarism'". Online at [http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/krog\\_morris.asp](http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/krog_morris.asp) [22 March 2006].

<sup>74</sup> See Watson's accusations in *New Contrast*, op cit., and Krog's reply: Antjie Krog, "Stephen Watson in the annals of Plagiarism". Online at [http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/krog\\_krog.asp](http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/krog_krog.asp) [22 March 2006].

<sup>75</sup> Gagiano, "By What Authority?". Also cited in Ceele Jacobson, "Top writers in plagiarism row – UCT poet accuses Antjie Krog of using work of other authors", *Sunday Times*, (19 February 2006).



archive in facilitating the current “commodification” and “kitschification” of the Bleek-Lloyd materials.<sup>76</sup>

The foregoing mapping of the Bleek-Lloyd materials in their various productions of knowledge both disciplinary and popular is by no means exhaustive or complete. Like Gagiano, this investigation amounts to a “small symphony” in the midst of a topic so vast as to merely hint at the larger project of the entire socio-history of South Africa.<sup>77</sup> Yet, using the Bleek-Lloyd collection as case study in this way provides some evidence of the ability of the archive to facilitate a wide range of applications and deployments. Along with facilitating both the stretching and the compression of time and space, the archive is able to accommodate finite, methodologically led interpretations, in the case of ethnography. It is also able to facilitate open-ended encounters with limited space for the articulation of marginalised voices or the presence of the unknown, as in its multi- or cross-disciplinary uses. In the case of postmodernist, literary and/or aesthetic productions of the Bleek-Lloyd materials, it has provided space for debate around significant issues of authorship, cultural exploitation, and the larger question of representation. What is highlighted in all this, moreover, is the need “to bear a more paradoxical and difficult relationship” with the past and with its ““original inhabitants””.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Gagiano, ““By What Authority?””, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Gagiano, ““By What Authority?””, 9.

<sup>78</sup> Gagiano, ““By What Authority?””, 2.

## Conclusion; An archive for all seasons

*“Since the late 1990s the Bleek and Lloyd archive has inspired creative and scholarly work in hundreds of publications. Type Bleek Lloyd into Google and you will find almost half a million entries. Yet the archive has still evaded full publication.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“Although the /Xam language has not been used regularly for a century, the fact that these memories were recorded as they were spoken has enabled them to contribute to a revival of interest in the language, customs and beliefs of South Africa’s first indigenous people. /Xam has become like South Africa’s Latin and has taken its place in the country’s coat of arms.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“So these are the traces the Flat and Grass Bushmen tribes were obliged to leave us as they bowed out, a living tradition become archaeology, words into fossils. One does buy the current attempts to sift and interpret these horrible burial sites of debris. But one also notes that in the new South Africa, scholars should perhaps speak out a bit more on the human cost of such a grim inheritance.”<sup>3</sup>*

THE Bleek-Lloyd materials have proved themselves to be fruitful ground for the production of various forms of knowledge. Over the years, they have serviced the emergence and formalisation of a range of academic disciplines from philology and language studies to the interpretation of rock art and modern ethnographies of remnant hunter gatherer groups in the Kalahari. I have tried to give a sense of these in the previous chapter. The materials have moreover shown themselves amenable to expressive and aesthetic interpretations both public and popular. These have, from the 1990s onwards, especially encompassed postmodernist modes of expression including installation art, exhibition, and performance. The groundbreaking *Miscast* installation exhibition has been discussed previously. Both the Clanwilliam-based festival series of performances, lantern parades and story telling, as well as Jazzart Dance and Magnet

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<sup>1</sup> Pippa Skotnes, “The Legacy of Bleek and Lloyd: An introduction”, interactive DVD to accompany *Lloyd Bleek Collection* digital archive (Cape Town: LLAREC-University of Cape Town, in press), 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Janette Deacon’s foreword in Jeremy C Hollmann, Ed., *Customs and Beliefs of the/ Xam Bushmen* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, n.d), xiii.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Gray, “Recording the Bushmen’s voices”, *Mail and Guardian* (10-16 October 1997), 35. Clipping found in “Additional Information” file, BC 151. The article is a review of Janette Deacon and Thomas Dowson’s edited publication *Voices from the Past*, and Karen Schoeman’s *A Debt of Gratitude*.

theatres' 2004 collaborative production *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, offer intriguing examples of performative adaptations of the Bleek-Lloyd materials.<sup>4</sup> However, this discussion would be incomplete without a consideration of two recent manifestations of the collection which project it onto an entirely new, global plane. These are the UNESCO *Memory of the World* citation, conferred on the collection following an application process, in 1997, and the UCT-aligned project to digitise the notebooks and other elements of the collection, which began in 2002.

### ***Memory of the World***

GROWING international interest in the collection in the 1990s culminated in its inclusion on UNESCO's *Memory of the World* register. The programme was initiated by the UN to protect "fragile" documentary heritage considered to be of international importance, and which reflected the world's diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. The assumption motivating the programme is that "some items, collections, holdings or fonds of documentary heritage are a part of the inheritance of the world, in the same way as are the sites of outstanding universal value listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List".<sup>5</sup> These documentary collections were "deemed to be of such significance as to transcend the boundaries of time and culture". The objectives of the programme are to raise the profile of such collections, to improve access to them, and to "develop products based on this documentary heritage and make them available for wide distribution". In addition, the *Memory of the World* programme seeks to raise awareness within countries and internationally, about the significance – and sensitivity, of documentary heritage in general.<sup>6</sup> The Bleek collection was selected as fulfilling the *Memory of the World* criteria out of a total of five nominations from South Africa that were submitted in 1997. Other nominations were the Colenso Papers, a collection of Africana and Art material from Kimberley, the Strange Africana Collection, and a collection of newspapers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the Clanwilliam Art and Performance project, see Pippa Skotnes and Mark Fleishman, *A Story is the Wind, Representing time and space in San narratives* (Cape Town: LLAREC Series in Visual History, 2002). The Jazzart/Magnet Theatre production *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* was a highlight of the 2004 National Festival in Grahamstown, and has travelled to international venues. It is based on an earlier collaboration in 1995, between Jazzart Dance Theatre and Mark Fleishman.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Foster and Roslyn Russel, with Jan Lyall, *Memory of the World, General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage* (UNESCO: General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1995), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Foster, *et al.*, 5.

In the nomination form prepared by UCT archivists at the time, the Bleek collection was described as “almost the sole resource for knowledge of [hunter-gatherer] systems of thought” shedding “light on a unique religious system, a unique consciousness, a unique system of representation, all of which are now extinct”. In the category “social value”, the collection was described as shedding “light on other hunter-gatherer societies and the way in which pre-capitalist hunter-gatherers interpreted their universe. These collections provide the only means of hearing one of the most fascinating of the ‘lost voices’ of humanity.”<sup>8</sup> In a draft of the nomination, the notebooks were referred to as a “Rosetta Stone which enabled scholars to decipher the meaning of Southern African rock art” and the texts contained therein were credited with contributing to “advances ... in the study of Australian and European rock art”.<sup>9</sup>

To date, the Bleek collection is the only South African collection cited. According to the *Memory of the World* register for 2005, the total of 68 registrations includes only six (including the Bleek collection) collections from African countries. Among the collections listed are the Endeavour Journal of James Cook (Australia, 2001), the Colonial Archives (Benin, 1997), the Codex Techaloyan from Cuajimalpaz (Mexico), the Leprosy Archives of Bergen (Norway, 2001), The 1893 Women’s Suffrage Petition (New Zealand, 1997), The Derek Walcott Collection (Trinidad and Tobago, 1997), Treasurers from National Archives and Library Organisations (Ethiopia, 1997), and the Afrique occidentale française, AOF (Senegal, 1997).<sup>10</sup> As reflected in the preceding list of *Memory of the World* citations, archives deeply implicated in the colonial project feature extensively on the register, amid a concerted attempt to also reflect documentary heritage from the colonised world where possible. However, the register as presently constituted, indeed, the very motivations underpinning the *Memory of the World* programme, cannot but reflect and underline the connections made earlier in this dissertation. These connections are between the origination and founding of

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<sup>7</sup> *South African Library News Bulletin* No 2 (4 February 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Undated draft nomination form, *Memory of the World* Register, BC 151 Bleek Collection, Memory of the World Programme.

<sup>9</sup> Draft motivation, undated typescript: 3-4; draft typescript attached to letter from Nigel Penn dated 27 September 1996: 3, facsimile from Peter Coates (of SA Library’s Preservation Dept) of draft joint nomination form attached to letter from University Librarian A.S.C. Hooper, 14 October 1996: 5; all in BC 151: Bleek Collection – Memory of the World Programme, archivists’ working files, UCT.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm/register/index.html> [29 September 2005]. Year in brackets refers to the year in which the citation was made.

documentary collections and the archives in which they are housed, and the associated projects of colonisation, modernisation, and the establishment of laws and cities.

It is in this recasting, as fragile documentary heritage, or “memory of the world” with significance far beyond its place of origination, that the Bleek-Lloyd materials enter the highly contested field of national heritage. The *Memory of the World* citation, and the use of the /Xam language on the coat of arms for the “new” South Africa, have together contributed to a reconstitution of the Bleek-Lloyd collection as founding narrative for the transformed nation. In line with the Rosetta Stone analogy mentioned earlier, Janette Deacon has commented that the inclusion of /Xam on the country’s coat of arms indicates that “/Xam has become like South Africa’s Latin”.<sup>11</sup> Both analogies highlight notions of the notebooks and transcriptions as mediating between “primitive” and “civilised” worlds, as well as being all that survives of a “lost” or “extinct” cultural group. It has been argued that it is within this territory of heritage and memorialisation where the archive is expected to play a reconciliatory role.<sup>12</sup> It is within this very deployment, however, as site of memorialisation and recovery, that the processes of selection and silencing fundamental to the business of archive making become ignored. As has been discussed in relation to the “bodies of evidence” and testimony resulting from Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the archive in this configuration is framed not only as a repository of empirical data where traumatic evidence may be laid to rest, but also as “a place of national recovery, providing healing and history”.<sup>13</sup> In relation to the Bleek-Lloyd materials, the implications of the early research project for the service of colonialism and racial “othering”, appear to have been forgotten in favour of the notebook texts figuring sometimes as evidence in support of empirical fieldwork, and other times as “lost voices” of an “extinct” people.

## The digital archive

A PROJECT of digitising the Bleek-Lloyd materials is underway. While supporting the aims of the *Memory of the World* citation, the project is independent of UNESCO. Titled the *Lloyd*

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<sup>11</sup> See Janette Deacon’s foreward in Jeremy C Hollmann, Ed., *Customs and Beliefs of the /Xam Bushmen* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, n.d.), xiii.

<sup>12</sup> Ciraj Rassool, Leslie Witz and Gary Minkley.. “Burying and Memorialising the Body of Truth: the TRC and National Heritage” in W James and L van de Vijver, Eds., *After the TRC: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), 115-127.

*Bleek Collection*, the virtual archive sets out “to digitise, annotate and index the 12 000-page archive of notebooks, as well as several hundred drawings and water-colours, letters and documents, and, “subject them to creative interpretation”.<sup>14</sup> It is authored and edited by Pippa Skotnes and Eustacia Riley, is indexed and fully searchable, and offers high resolution digital images of each of the notebook pages.<sup>15</sup> The project is associated with LLAREC (the *Lucy Lloyd Archive Resource and Exhibition Centre* directed by Skotnes), and reflects the Michaelis-based research centre’s stated intention to promote curatorship, including digital curatorship, as “a form of fine arts practice and as a means to preserve and publish material of historical, archaeological and cultural significance”.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the digital project represents a culmination of Skotnes’s more than 20 years of artistic and research interest in the Bleek-Lloyd archive, her desire to pay tribute to Lucy Lloyd’s great contribution to the archive and to recognise her (Lloyd’s) achievements as scholar. Along with making the stories of //Kabbo, /Han ~~★~~ass’o, Dia!kwain and the others available to a global audience, Skotnes presents the digital archive as her response both to //Kabbo’s desire that his peoples’ stories became known by means of books, as well as to the question Lucy Lloyd asked in the introduction to her own publication, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*, as to whether, and when, “the remainder of the manuscripts, as well as the fine collection of copies of Bushman pictures made by the late Mr G W Stow”, would be published.<sup>17</sup> Through the digital publication, moreover, Skotnes hopes to make space for an engagement with issues of representation and identity raised by the use of the /Xam language as motto for the post-apartheid nation, and to complicate notions of nationalism and difference inscribed in the phrase !k’e e |xarra ||ke (people who are different come together), which is the wording on the crest of the “new South Africa”.<sup>18</sup> Skotnes has also stated that the digital archiving project was undertaken “in part as an attempt to preserve the original artwork and notebooks and take them out of circulation”.<sup>19</sup>

The LLAREC project can thus be summarised as motivated by Skotnes’s combined desire to recognise and pay tribute to the work of Lucy Lloyd, and to

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<sup>13</sup> Rassool, *et al.*, 126-127.

<sup>14</sup> Skotnes, “The Legacy of Bleek and Lloyd: An introduction”, 5.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/dynapage.jsp?id=23> [17 March 2006].

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/dynapage.jsp?id=23> [17 March 2006].

<sup>17</sup> Skotnes, “The Legacy of Bleek and Lloyd”, 13-14.

<sup>18</sup> Skotnes, “The Legacy of Bleek and Lloyd”, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Pippa Skotnes, “Bad track record”, *Monday Paper* letters Vol 25 No 6 (27 March – 2 April 2006), 4.

make the Bleek-Lloyd materials more widely accessible, as a research tool and for creative interpretation, to scholars and readers around the world. It also aims, in its virtual space, to unite the Bleek and Lloyd materials from all three institutions, thus reversing in cyberspace, the physical fragmentation of the Bleek-Lloyd materials among three Cape Town institutions. Digital imaging is also part of UCT's general library policy.<sup>20</sup> Among other introductory projects, the Manuscripts and Archives department has completed the digital scanning of a collection of 310 black and white photographic images made by Dorothea Bleek during field trips taken between 1910 and the late 1920s. The collection is now available for use on CD-Rom in the library, while 50 of the images have been placed on the library website. This initial project is part of a wider programme of digital imaging of records currently underway at UCT's libraries.<sup>21</sup>

On the one hand, aiding aspects of conservation and even facilitating the continued survival of fragile records, the digital archive, on the other, raises interesting questions about notions of authenticity, the meaning of virtual document collections, and about the necessary presence of materiality for grounding interactions with the past. Martin Hall describes the use of digital techniques to restore "copied archives" of manuscript collections destroyed by ethnic conflict.<sup>22</sup> The digital archive, he argues, fits neatly into global information flows, facilitating the cross-border mobilisation of ethnic identities pinned to local places of cultural identity. In so doing, the virtual archive provides for a displacement and refiguring of ethnic violence.<sup>23</sup> Cyber space has provided space for the facilitation and expansion of minority rightwing or neo-nazi identities. Warning of the dark side of global information flows, Hall argues that the proliferation of digital archives, set free as they are from the limits imposed by a grounding in materiality, may be linked to the displacement of ethnic violence from the (formerly) colonial periphery, to its centre.<sup>24</sup> David Bearman raises questions around the technical challenges posed by the arrival of electronic record keeping in the archive, and

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<sup>20</sup> Lesley Hart, "The Digital Experience at the University Of Cape Town Libraries", seminar paper, Between research and documentation: building up digital libraries and developing documentation networks in the South West of the Indian Ocean, Université de la Réunion (4-5 November 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Hart, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Hall, "Blackbirds and Black Butterflies" in Carolyn Hamilton *et al.*, Eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 351.

<sup>23</sup> Hall, "Blackbirds", 352-360.

<sup>24</sup> Hall, "Blackbirds", 356-359.

warns that digital archiving brings with it complexities as well as great advantages.<sup>25</sup> Bearman's concerns are with electronic record keeping rather than the digital imaging of existing traditional materials. However, his conclusions are worth considering, given the enthusiasm expressed around the presumed advantages of digital conversion as a means of preservation and conservation in archives. Bearman argues that democratic society and social memory depend upon a stronger bond being forged "among South Africans and between citizens and the state" around the development of new policies and infrastructures to govern electronic record-keeping.<sup>26</sup> To facilitate this, the role of the archivist in society needs to be negotiated and accepted, and it has to be accepted that electronic record keeping requires a "more explicit, rule-based formulation" of appraisal and retention policies".<sup>27</sup>

The break in continuity ushered in by the digital turn confronts head on the issues raised earlier by Kracauer and Benjamin in relation to the roles of photography and reproduction, the place of the past, and notions of authenticity, meaning and the "real". The complexities around setting the past free from its connection with materiality are unresolved. Instead, digitisation of archives is presented in an unproblematised way, promising finality and closure for the past on one hand, and unlimited access to all on the other. The digitising project appears relentless in its mission to encode every part of the Bleek-Lloyd materials, and to present them as accessible to all. The reality of whose access is being facilitated, and whose limited by unequal access to technology, remains to be addressed.

## **Archive writing**

THE preceding chapters have presented a series of engagements, both theoretical and particular, with archives in general, and the Bleek-Lloyd materials in particular.

In chapter 1, I examined a range of theoretical approaches to the archive. Foucault's view is that the archive is central to all engagement with the past, and the means of limited what can be said about what has been done. Foucault distinguishes between the haphazard nature of memory and the purposive collection and cataloguing

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<sup>25</sup> David Bearman, "Electronic Record-keeping, Social Memory and Democracy" in Carolyn Hamilton *et al*, eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 323-331.

<sup>26</sup> Bearman, 331.



of documents. The organising of documents is akin to Linnaean taxonomy which structures knowledge so that ideas and information become produced in terms of their relation, status, and position with other ideas. These theoretical approaches further elucidate the archive as an institution embedded in technologies of surveillance, control and governance. The archive is shown as a feature of colonialism and modernity, and crucial in the construction of the colonial other. The archive is connected inextricably to the city, to processes of settlement and lawmaking, and to the modernising project. Also, the archive is integral to writing, and plays a role in mediating different kinds of writing, such as fiction, myth and history. At its centre is confusion, and writing is the act of inscribing order in the archive. As such, the Bleek-Lloyd materials can be positioned within the city and modernity, a containment within the archive of a set of recorded imaginings previously linked to the /Xam landscapes of the northern Cape, now contained and limited by writing and labelling, and the archival practices of the city.

The South African experience of political transformation has provided an ideal context in which to examine the postcolonial archive as site for the rediscovery of “lost” voices, for healing and recovery, and for the triumphant articulation of a “new” national narrative for the transformed nation. As has been argued, this framing of the archive as site of reconciliation and triumph tends to efface an engagement with the archive as an incomplete record, or a sliver of a whole. The demands of nation-building seem regularly to marginalise the Derridean view of the archive as an incomplete materialisation of the past, always open to new interpretations in the future, and which has more in common with the psyche than with a seamless record of the past. Furthermore, the great value and importance with is ascribed by post-apartheid South Africa, to the Bleek-Lloyd materials, points to a re-positioning, after Foucault, of society in relation to the archived documents.

The imperialist and colonial environments within which the Bleek and Lloyd “bushman researches” were situated, and the effect of these on the psycho-intellectual spaces within which the interactions took place, is discussed in chapter 2. Invoking a Derridean view of the archive defined in terms of psychoanalysis, I argued that the

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<sup>27</sup> Bearman, 331

making of the collection should be situated within the context of the stretched chronological, geographical (physical) and intellectual (psychological) spaces encompassed by the research. The early fragmentation of the collection between and within institutions can be linked to particular interpretations of Bleek-Lloyd materials, and the effect of curatorial practice is further reflected in gendered readings of the archive. The evidence of fragmentation, rupture and contradiction as revealed by the trajectories of materials undermines archival claims to the production of order and science.

Chapter 3 describes the critical role of Dorothea Bleek in the initial establishment of the Bleek collection, for her part in treasuring and preserving the material outputs of the research undertaken by her father and aunt. Her continued scholarship in the field of African life and languages, moreover, contributed to the creation of an academic context and field of research in which the collection could be situated during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. I argue that Dorothea Bleek's highly personal decision to treasure and extend the "bushman researches" undertaken by her father and aunt, was the critical moment at which that past became possible. Equally critical to the process of archive formation was Otto Spohr, whose dogged and determined contribution to the making of the archive appears to have been motivated by shared German nationalism, and personal identity. Spohr's interventions are indelibly inscribed in the collection through its early contextualisation in terms of an heroic, gendered construction of Bleek, as well as in the presence of his (Spohr's) research notes. However, Spohr failed to uncover what is today acknowledged as the most valuable element of the collection – the notebooks. Their "rediscovery" by Hewitt points to a moment where chance intervened in the otherwise purposeful process of archive building.

This research shows archive formation and archival practice to be haphazard and grappling, as well as purposeful and directed. Like the research process itself, the business of archive-making is underpinned by the desire to make everything appear scientific and finite. Documents are presented as accessible and able to tell the whole story. This case-study of the Bleek-Lloyd materials gives practical evidence that processes of archive-making are, at times, purposive and dictated by personal interest and identity, as well as haphazard and open to chance. Beneath the ordered catalogues

and lists of “records”, lies a narrative of missing images, albums and manuscripts, a tale of personal, *ad hoc* agreements between collection managers and academics, and of founding moments and the “rediscovery” of missing elements. Beneath numbered acquisition files lies the ceaseless flow of documents, manuscripts and objects from one institution to another, and within categories in those institutions. The archaeologies of archive-making presented in chapters 2 and 3, show that confusion and spontaneity is to be found at the heart of the archival project of order, structure and classification. As shown in both the theory and practice of archives, documents, inventories and acquisition lists add layers to narratives told by documents themselves. Inventories, acquisition lists and the physical movement and transfer of documents and materials from one place to another, tell a story of archive formation which is at once haphazard and purposeful, spontaneous as well as studied. It is within these processes of ordering and naming, moreover, that relative values are ascribed to certain documents in relation to others.

The ebb and flow of documents and manuscripts between and within institutions, is furthermore linked to the series of knowledge projects which I have argued can be tracked in relation to the Bleek-Lloyd materials. The particular malleability of the archive has shown itself able to permit and negotiate a compression of time and space. The Bleek-Lloyd materials, I argue in chapter 4, have been stretched in chronological time and geographical space, to contribute to fields of academic knowledge which were not formalised at the time of the origination of the archive in a Mowbray sitting room in the 1870s. After contributing to racial taxonomies and “native” studies as fields of inquiry in the service of the apartheid state, the Bleek-Lloyd materials in the post-apartheid nation, are now providing space for the identification of “hidden” histories and the reclamation of indigenous identities. Recast as “memory of the world”, the collection has achieved international redemptive value as a “lost” voice belonging to a “vanished people”.

## **Representation of the intimate**

WE can engage with notions of archive as intimate and subjective as those within the psyche, to the external, ideologically-charged manifestations of archive contained within public, even national, postcolonial spaces of heritage art and culture. What this

dissertation highlights, therefore, is the ability of the archive to facilitate a representation of the intimate on the global stage. In their production in a range of knowledge projects, the Bleek-Lloyd materials move from the private, contained space of the actual research encounters, to the worldwide public space where the archive now takes its place as a *Memory of the World*. There is the contrast between the questing, hesitant building of a relationship between people from very different milieus finding humanity in each other, against the idea of universal redemption which is encoded in the characterisation of the archive as site of connection to an idealised vision of pristine, pre-civilised culture. The human scale of situated readings of the collection may be measured against the epic level on which the homogenised *Memory of the World* readings takes place in a globally-linked world.

Closer to home, the Bleek-Lloyd materials have been inserted into a narrative constituted by a national strategy in terms of which the country's history and transition from colonialism and apartheid to freedom and democracy, is narrated through the trope of the inevitable triumph of the human spirit over adversity. In the field of heritage production, it has been argued, this can become a convenient means to avoid addressing the painful and difficult instances where inequalities and stereotyped ideas constructed in the past are allowed to continue unproblematised into the present.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Crain Soudien, "Museums of Conscience: Whose role is it to remember?", paper presented to the South African Museums Associations conference (Cape Town, 1-3 June, 2004).

## Journeys

I HAVE traversed many layers and spaces in this journey of archive making. In relation to my particular case study, I have covered the imaginary distances between the colonial streets of Cape Town, and the dusty plains of the northern Cape. I have imagined a genteel sitting room in Mowbray, and the tortured spaces of the Breakwater Prison. In relation to the more generalised project of archive making, I have delved briefly into the life Otto Spohr, become friendly with him, even, through reading his correspondence to publishers, friends and colleagues both present and former. I have sat in the research room of the Manuscripts and Archives department at UCT, and listened to the murmurings of two fellow researchers who are in the process of constructing an index for the digital archiving of Dorothea Bleek's notebooks. I am struck by the void which opens up between the materiality of the notebooks, and the ultimate production of a virtual archive no longer anchored in materiality. It seems then, that this exploration of archive making and the Bleek-Lloyd materials, ends at a moment of rupture for this archive in particular, and indeed, for the archive in general, as both confront the unknowability at the heart of the digital turn in the archive.

*Jill Weintroub*

*6 April 2006*

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(Appendix 1)

**Timeline<sup>1</sup>**

**1827: Wilhelm b. 8 March**

**1851: WHI graduates from Bonn University with PhD on 6 August**

**1852: WHI embarks on first trip to Africa**

**1854: WHI departs West Africa**

**1855: WHI arrives in Durban on 20 May**

**1856: WHI moves to Cape Town in October, becomes interpreter to the colonial government**

**1857: WHI first interviews with “bushman” prisoners at Cape Town and on Robben Island**

**1859: WHI in Europe until 1860**

**1861: WHI meets Jemima Lloyd at boarding house**

**1862: WHI appointed curator of Grey Library**

**1862: WHI marries Jemima (November 22)**

**1862: Newlyweds move to house in New Street, Cape Town**

**1863: Edith b. 8 Aug**

**1866: WHI interviews prisoners from the “Agterveld”**

**1867: Family move to Mowbray, actual residence unknown**

**1868: Ernst Fredrich b. 15 July (d. 18 Feb 1869)**

**1869: WHI travels to Europe**

**1869: Family move to The Hill, Mowbray**

**1869: Mabel (May) b. 12 Dec (m. Jaeger)**

**1869: WHI travels to Europe**

**1870: /A!kunta arrives at The Hill on 29 August (stays till 15.10.1873)**

**1871: //Kabbo arrives at The Hill on 16 February (stays till 15.10.1873)**

**1871: Margaret (Margie) b. 28 June (d. Italy)**

**Hermine b. 28 June (d. 23Aug)**

**1871-1872: /A!kunta and /Kabbo accompany family on holiday to Kalk Bay**

**1872: Anthropometric prints sent by WHI to Grey in New Zealand (14 May)**

**1873: 1<sup>st</sup> Report submitted to Cape Parliament**

**1873: Dorothea b. 1873 (d. 27 June 1948, Plumstead)**

**1873: =kasin arrives Nov 1; Dia!kwain “shortly before Christmas” (till 8.03.1874)**

**1874: Dia/kwain, =kasin, !kwieten ta //ken and children, return 13 June**

**1875: =kasin, !kwieten ta //ken and children leave on 13 January**

**1875: Family move to Charlton House (January)**

**1875: WHI dies 17 Aug**

**1875: Wilhelmine (Helma) b. 16 Dec (m. H H Bright, daughter KFM Scott)**

**1876: //Kabbo dies 25 January**

**1876: Dia!kwain leaves Mowbray 7 March**

**1877: !kwabba-an (//Kabbo’s widow) dies, near Vanwyksvlei, in January**

**1877: /Han=kass’o begins journey to Mowbray, with wife Suobba-//kein, who dies during the journey**

**1878: /Han=kass’o arrives at Mowbray 10 January**

**1879: Piet Lynx and family arrive at Mowbray 24 January**

**1879: !Kung boys !Nanni and Tamme arrive 1 September**

**1879: /Han=kass'o leaves Mowbray in December**

**1880: Piet Lynx and family depart on 30 January**

**1880: /Uma and Da arrive on 25 March**

**1881: /Uma leaves on 12 December**

**1882: !Nanni and Tamme leave on 28 March**

**1884: Da leaves on 29 March**

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the dates in this timeline are derived from Lucy Lloyd, Ed., *A Short Account of Further Bushman Material Collected* (London: David Nutt, 1889); and WHI Bleek and LC Lloyd, Ed., *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* (London: George Allen & Company, 1911). Additional sources include WHI Bleek, "Report of Dr Bleek concerning his Researches into the Bushman Language and Customs, presented to the Honourable the House of Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor" (Cape Town, 1873); CJ Beyers, Ed., *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol IV (Pretoria and Durban: Human Sciences Research Council, Butterworth & Co, 1981), 315-316; WJ de Kock, Ed., *Dictionary of South African Bibliography*, Vol I (Johannesburg: National Council for Social Research, 1968), 80-85 and 473-476; Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson, Ed., *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996); and J David Lewis-Williams, Ed., *Stories that Float from Afar: Ancestral Folklore of the San of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000).